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The trade union and political activities
of the North Wales slate quarrymen in
relation to their social and working
conditions. 1870 - 1905.

One Volume

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ABSTRACT

The slate quarrymen dominated a cluster of communities in North-West Wales, stamping them with their own distinctive marks; characteristics many of which originated in the customs of a group of industrial workers albeit a group with some very close relationships with the land. These were also Welsh communities and the quarrying villages reflected many of the concerns of Welsh society in the 19th century - culturally, politically, and in religion.

The slate quarries and mines themselves were responsible for forging much of the quarryman's identity, the nature and organisation of work and wages determining much. The question of control at the point of production was the major point at issue in the industrial relations of the slate industry in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The North Wales Quarrymen's Union was established in 1874 following an earlier and unsuccessful attempt in 1865. The first five years of the union's existence witnessed some heartening successes but following the depression which set in to the industry from 1879 onward the union's path became an increasingly difficult one; this became especially true after 1885 when employers strove to reduce their costs and increase their control. A series of major disputes followed in 1885, 1893 and 1896-7 culminating in the set-piece battle in the Penrhyn Quarries from 1900 to 1903; a dispute of national importance which witnessed many attempts - peaceful and violent - to maintain the solidarity of the workforce and which drew on all the resources of the community.

The quarrymen largely accepted the leadership of the active local middle-class but they also came to develop a consciousness of themselves not only as craftsmen but also as workers, a consciousness encouraged, though by no means crystallised, by the Penrhyn experience.

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Declaration.

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2. A part of Chapter V was published in Llafur No.4.
3. A version of Chapter VII was published in the Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society Vol.35, as was the table in Appendix 4
4. A version of Chapter III is to be published by Routledge Keegan and Paul in 1976.

Note.

Most of the quotations in
this thesis have been
translated from Welsh by
the author.

Chapter I. The Quarryman and his Community.

1. Introduction.

For over a century slate quarrying was North West Wales' major industry: in 1793 26,000 Tons of slate were produced, in 1877, at the height of the boom, over 450,000 Tons of Welsh slate went onto the market, much of it being exported. The industry survived a series of booms and depressions from 1790 to the mid-fifties, though the general trend was distinctly toward increased production, and for the next quarter of a century it witnessed a remarkable boom. From the late 1870s to the late nineties, however, the industry suffered varying degrees of depression, a short lived boom at the turn of the century collapsed in 1903 and the depression was from then on unrelieved, spiralling into a catastrophic slump during the First World War. Despite many promised new dawns the industry then contracted steadily and by the 1960s was no more than an echo of its former self. (1.)

North Wales produced over 90 per cent of Britain's slate (2) and the varying types of slate produced in the area were, moreover, generally acknowledged to be of the best quality in the world. (3) Slate was produced in many other countries, pre-eminently in France and the U.S.A. but Wales was the major producer of high-class slate. According to the government's mineral statistics for 1882 slate was, after coal and iron, the most valuable mineral raised in the United Kingdom. (5)

The major slate producing belt extended from Bethesda, in Caernarfonshire, to the North, a town where the majority of Penrhyn quarrymen lived, to Blaenau Ffestiniog, the

largest town in Merionethshire, some fifteen miles to the South. Apart from Ffestiniog and Bethesda the other major centres were Llanberis, where the Dinorwic Quarries were situated, and the Nantlle Valley, where there was a cluster of quarries. Slate was also quarried in smaller quantities in other parts of the area, primarily in the Corris district of south Merionethshire.

Each of the main slate areas was separately connected to the sea at its own busy slate port: Port Penrhyn, Port Dinorwic, Caernarfon and Porthmadoc were linked to the quarries by rail connections steadily improved during the first half of the century. Both Dinorwic and Penrhyn maintained their own fleets of ships to carry their slate. Port Penrhyn was linked to the general railway system in 1848, Port Dinorwic and Caernarfon in 1852 and Porthmadoc in 1867.

The method of working the slate vein varied from district to district. In Caernarfonshire, where some two-thirds of the total was produced, the slate was quarried in open quarries: in the Bethesda and Llanberis districts these quarries were worked in galleries, gigantic steps in the mountainside, each as high as a house. Penrhyn and Dinorwic, both of them huge excavations, had over a score of such galleries. In the Nantlle area quarries were sunk down into the earth, sheer sided chasms, some over five-hundred feet deep. In Blaenau Ffestiniog the slate was mined rather than quarried tunnels leading into the chambers, gigantic caverns, where the slate was won underground; the slate hills of Ffestiniog were honeycombed with tunnels and chambers, in one case to^a depth of over 1400 feet. (6.)

Slate production was not restricted to quarrying

the rock, however, for a great deal of skill and effort had to be exerted before the blocks of slate could be fashioned into slates for roofing or some other purpose. The dressing, sawing and splitting of the slates was carried out in the sheds built near to the rock face. In many a quarry it was these sheds, and the gigantic tips of waste slate, which marked the presence of industry.

From the early 1870 to the turn of the century the number of men labouring in the slate quarries fluctuated between 12,000 and almost 15,000, depending on the state of the industry; by the outbreak of the First World War there were only 8,000 and during the war the number fell to 4,000, and though it was to rise in the inter-war years it never again reached 10,000. (7.)

It was a small industry, therefore, but one which had a profound effect upon the mountainous and isolated counties of Merioneth and Caernarfonshire. The quarrymen created distinctive organisations and expressed distinctive attitudes. This Thesis is primarily concerned with understanding some of those organizations and attitudes in a period when the slate industry was still of importance.

2. An Industrial Community.

The quarrymen lived in small and isolated villages and townships but they were settlements that bore indelibly the stamp of industry, and many of the beliefs and actions of the quarrymen stemmed from the conditions imposed upon, and created by, a group of industrial workers concentrated in their villages in a rural and mountainous setting.

The first point to note is that these were industrial villages which owed their size, and in most cases their very existence, to the slate industry. And despite the backdrop of mountainous grandeur they shared many of the conditions of industrial communities elsewhere.

W.J.Gruffydd, who was born in the quarrying village of Bethel, commented angrily that the Rhondda and Dowlais are talked of by us as dreadful examples of the lack of concern of public authorities in the last century, but even the people of the Rhondda would be shocked if they could come on a visit to the villages of Arfon.... all the arrangements for health, water, cleansing and planning are more primitive and barbaric than in any slums I know of " (8.)

There was a difference in scale of course between the choked crammed valleys of South Wales and the scattered townships and villages of the slate industry but many of the problems associated with industrialisation were as oppressive and intolerable in the isolated villages under the shadow of the slate tips as they were elsewhere; on a smaller scale but equally ferocious in their effects on the people who had to live with them.

For despite the fact that North Wales had long been a popular tourist area the slate villages perched on the very mountains the tourist came to see had no picturesque flourishes, only terraced streets, huge squatting chapels and the artificial and growing mountains of slate waste which overhung it all: " shapeless, monotonous villages - grey and drab " (9.) as one historian has called them. Even the official guide to Bethesda, amidst descriptions of spectacular mountain scenery, had to admit that the main street is not

attractive " (10.) And Bethesda was no more unattractive than Blaenau Ffestiniog or Penrhyndeudraeth in Merioneth, Penygroes and Talysarn in Dyffryn Nantlle or Llanberis and Ebenezer. Even the smaller quarrying villages such as Nantlle are marked distinctly as slate villages by the squashed terraces, the brooding chapel and, lest one forget on a sunny day lulled by the grandeur of mountain and lake, by the acres of slate waste rising from the back gardens to the skyline. These were industrial villages housing an industrial community.

But an industrial community which had by no means lost all contact with the land. Many quarrymen and their families still held a very close relationship with farming either by having laboured at some time in the fields, having relatives still farming or by having small farms themselves. "Attendance poor", reported the headmaster of the Tregarth National Infant School in July 1901, "owing to children going to hay making" (11.) The tenacity with which the quarrymen of Dinorwic fought in 1885 to defend their right to work in the hay harvest (12) is proof of the widespread practice of this custom in that area; in 1892 the manager of the New Welsh Slate Company in Blaenau Ffestiniog also complained that

"in the summer, for instance in hay harvest, a good many go away so that our men are rather more irregular in the hay harvest" (13.)

The farmer's calendar was therefore to some extent the quarryman's also and a good number of hands skilled in gauging rock ^{and} wielding chisel and mallet could also perform with a long scythe in one of the bands that on July mornings would, standing in line, swathe their way through hilly hay fields. Many quarrymen had relatives who had

farms or smallholdings and many lived with parents or other relatives on small plots of land. (14)

A substantial number of quarrymen were also cottagers, renting and farming small plots of land: "a great many of them keep small farms" (15) remarked a witness before the Quarry Committee of Inquiry of 1893 referring to the Dyffryn Nantlle area; "some come from a distance and have farms" (16) commented a quarry manager to the Royal Commission ^{on} Labour referring to (17) quarrymen working in Blaenau Ffestiniog. ⁽¹⁸⁾ In Bethesda one observer noted in 1893 that "some have actually realized the Chamberlain idea - three acres and a cow" (19) an observation borne out by the existence of 168 rented cottages on the Penrhyn Estate in Bethesda, ⁽²⁰⁾ mostly inhabited by quarrymen, and "with land sufficient to keep a cow" (21). The quarryman - cottager's life was one of ceaseless labour, tending the rocks by day and the small fields on every other opportunity; a farmer from Llanfihangel-y-Pennant recalled in 1893 how

"in my father's time I worked at the quarries, and used to hand over the whole of my wages to my father to assist him to live and to pay the rent and rates... in the summer months I used to work upon the farm after returning from the quarry until it was too dark to work" (22)

Money from the quarry must therefore have helped many a family to remain on the land: "the farmers about Ffestiniog are not the same as farmers in other parts of the country" explained William Cadwalader Williams of Tanygrisiau to the Royal Commission on

Land in 1893, for

"they get assistance in certain parts of the year in the quarries to pay their ways, and amongst many of the small farmers I think they work in the quarries to be able to pay rent for these farms. If it had not been for the quarries they could not live on the farm" (23)

The impoverished agriculture of the Snowdonia hills was therefore able to sustain a level of population higher than any income from the land could provide for thanks to the money earned in the quarries by farmers and their sons.

It is unlikely however that the situation was seen in this way: it appears, rather that quarrymen with a piece of land to farm saw this as a welcome additional source of income to their main employment in the quarries. (24) The fierce attachment of men to land they have "mixed their labour with" should not, of course, be underestimated and those forced off their farms into the quarry villages smarted with bitterness. (25) But notwithstanding (26) such forcibly disinherited farmers it would appear that in the areas where the quarryman-cottager was common he thought of himself as a quarryman rather than as a small farmer. To some extent, of course, this reflected the extremely small size of many of the holdings: slate quarrymen in Abergynolwyn, for example, rented holdings as small as three or even two acres in size. (27) In all census returns tenant farmers who also worked in slate quarries declared their occupation as "quarryman" and very rarely added details about any land held. Ioan Brothen explains how deeply this consciousness had gone in his own quarry-cottager area in 1906,

"very few boys born in the parish work on the land - their attraction, the majority of them, is toward the quarries, and therefore we must get men and boys from Caernarfonshire and elsewhere to farm the old parish" (28)

In a slightly more uncertain position were those men who worked as labourers in the larger quarries staying in "barracks" during the working week and returning home to rural villages on Saturday afternoon. On the whole these men came from Anglesey and the largest contingent worked in Dinorwic; many of them eventually settled in the quarry villages but many more continued to live the life of migrant workers, seeing their families only on Sundays and spending the rest of a comfortless week in appalling conditions in the barracks. These Anglesey men were the objects of some antagonism in the quarrying villages. W.J. Gruffydd testifies that

"there was a strange prejudice in Arfon years ago against Anglesey people; they were considered a famished primitive people rushing for their lives to the quarries." (29)

They were derided as being "foreigners" and labelled, for their rural background and habits, as "moch Sir Fon" (30) (Anglesey Pigs) and the "me-mes". Such expressions suggest a conscious differentiation made by the people of the quarrying areas between themselves and the surrounding rural population. (31) For by the last quarter of the nineteenth century immigration into the quarrying towns had become minimal and the slate craft was the possession of those already resident there; there was no constant stream of rural labourers

into the quarrying villages. D.Lleufer Thomas noted this fact and suggested an explanation for the Royal Commission on Labour in 1893:

"The slate quarries of North Wales do not seem to drain the agricultural population... exhaustively, one probable reason... apart from the small dimensions of the industry, is that those who are engaged at the chief quarries form a kind of hereditary guild of skilled workmen, into which it would be difficult for an agricultural labourer to be admitted." (32)

For, despite the strong connection with the land which a minority of quarrymen had, the majority of quarrymen and their families, living in the terraced streets of their villages had no direct connection with agriculture. "Have most of the men... farms or allotments?" a Ffestiniog quarry manager was asked by a Labour commissioner in 1892, "Not in our district", he replied, "the bulk of them live in the town of Blaenau" (33). And referring to that town a doctor commented three years later that "we have really very few in this neighbourhood outside the quarrymen". (34)

Many quarrymen, of course, had sizeable gardens, conscientiously cultivated; in Abergynolwyn a three acre field was split up into 35 gardening plots for the use of quarrymen (35). And many a long garden had a "cwt mochyn" (a pig shed) at the end furthest from the house. (36)

But gardening and pig-keeping do not amount to agriculture and a walk around any of the slate villages today show that a good many houses had no gardens at all. As the Inspector of Mines

reported in 1876 quarrymen "generally live in places where the luxury of a garden cannot be bought at any price". (37) Animal husbandry must, for many, have meant the careful breeding of poultry, pigeons or show rabbits and of little more. (38)

Precise figures as to the number of quarrymen in relation to other workers in the quarry villages are difficult to obtain since the census registration districts include both quarry, village and countryside within the old parish boundaries. (39) The Ffestiniog area in 1851 had 656 quarrymen over 20 resident, and 1708 males concerned with agriculture; Bangor (including Bethesda) had 1660 quarrymen and 2015 working on the land (there were also, inexplicably, 72 coal miners in the area) while Caernarfon had 1846 quarrymen and 2365 on the land. A decade later the number of those involved in agriculture had remained more or less static (fewer in Ffestiniog more in Bangor) while the number in the slate quarries had increased to 2669 in Caernarfon and 2074 in Bangor. By 1871 the number involved in agriculture had declined in three areas and there had been a sharp rise in the number of quarrymen - in Ffestiniog up to 2507, in Caernarfon to 3952 and in Bangor to 2669. In the two decades from 1851 to 1871 therefore the overall picture in the three areas was a slight decline in the total number of males working in agriculture and a growth in the number of slate quarrymen from 4162 in 1851 to 9128 in 1871, an increase the rate of which was much more pronounced in the decade 1861-71. Throughout Caernarfonshire and Merioneth the number of resident

quarrymen increased from 5770 in 1851 to 7679 in 1861, 8364 in 1871, 13,717 in 1881 and declined to 11,018 in 1911.

These figures are not entirely adequate; they do not include quarrymen resident outside of the two counties (particularly those from Anglesey) and neither do they include quarrymen under the age of 20, of whom there were 1704 in Caernarfonshire in 1861. Neither do the figures indicate the concentration of quarrymen into particular villages and towns. But more localised studies of census returns confirm the particular industrial identity of quarrying villages.

Of a total of 1464 occupied males over 10 in the Bethesda Urban District in 1901 900 were working in the slate quarries and this figure is certainly inadequate since the town's quarrymen were at that time on strike with many hundred of them working away from home when the count was taken. In the quarrying village of Corris in 1851 there were 84 men employed in the slate industry and only 24 employed in agriculture. The figures for the village of Nantlle in 1871 are even more convincing for in this "semi-rural" village with a total of 212 males in employment 27 men worked in copper or lead mines, 30 were employed in other diverse occupations while 144 worked in the nearby slate quarries, only seven men actually living in the village itself were employed in farms and only 4 quarrymen indicated that they also held pieces of land.

Immigration into the slate villages came almost entirely from within the three counties of Gwynedd. Of 49,149 people in Merioneth in 1901, 46,231 had been born within Wales and 36,807 within the county of Merioneth itself. The picture was the same

in Caernarfonshire.

A minority of the 659 people who lived in the village of Nantlle in 1871 had been born within the counties of the parish of Llanddwrog within which the village stood; but 548 of them had been born within Caernarfonshire. (40) Of the 111 born outside the county 50 had come from Anglesey (chiefly to work the copper mines in Drws-y-Coed) and 15 from Merioneth. Only 32 had been born outside of Wales and they consisted mainly of quarry owners engineers and their families.

As the village grew in the 1860s many quarrymen and their families moved into the new terraces from the immediate locality, more moved in from parishes slightly further away but very few came from outside North West Wales.

There is little evidence of much movement of quarrymen from one quarrying village to another after the mid-century (41) though there does appear to have been a significant movement of Caernarfonshire quarrymen to the Corris area in South Merionethshire. (42)

Many men did, however, travel significant distances to work everyday. The quarries of Blaenau Ffestiniog, for example, drew some of their labour from as far away as Criccieth and Porthmadog while a considerable number travelled daily by train from Penrhyndeudraeth, Trawsfynydd, Dolwyddelan and elsewhere. (43) The Dinorwic Quarries near Llanberis employed men from over sixty villages and hamlets in Caernarfonshire and Anglesey (though the bulk of the labour force and almost all the skilled quarrymen lived in the immediate vicinity of the quarries). (44)

The slate quarrying industry therefore extended its influence further than the villages clustered around the quarries themselves. The rural areas of Lley and Anglesey, in particular, felt the pull of the influence of the quarries. Anglesey, for example, witnessed not only the weekly exodus of men heading for the quarries of Caernarfonshire with their neat white satchels full of food for the coming week (45) but also, in the late 1880s, an attempt to unionise agricultural labourers which appeared to owe a good deal to the fact that

"many men from the island work in the slate quarries of Caernarfonshire; they come home early on Saturdays, and their presence in the villages, as well as the knowledge of their shorter hours in the slate industry, undoubtedly affected the minds of the farm labourers." (46)

The same influence was probably also felt in a less effective rural labourers' agitation in the Pwllheli district at the same time. (47)

The quarrymen therefore can be seen to have held a peculiarly close connection with the land. None of the quarry towns were very large, almost all their inhabitants came to them from the immediate hinterland, many quarrymen had, themselves, a direct interest in small scale agriculture either by renting small-holdings themselves or by living on their parents' holding. But this only applied to a minority; for the majority of quarrymen, apart perhaps for an occasional evening in the hay harvest, agriculture was no part of their livelihood; that was gained in the rocks of the quarry or mine and their lives were lived in the terraced streets

of their industrial villages.

3. Housing

In the Ffestiniog Local Board District in 1895 there were 2,110 houses of a rateable value of £9 a year or under and occupied almost entirely by quarrymen. A quarter of these homes were owner-occupied. There were also 265 houses of a rateable value of over £9, a high proportion of which were also occupied by quarrymen. (48)

In Llanberis the majority of houses seem to have been built by quarrymen themselves or bought by them off local builders though ground rent continued to be paid to the two main landlords in the area, the Vaynol and the Ty Du or Coed Mawr estates. (49) In the Bethesda area also the houses, some of them built by the quarrymen, were on land owned by the Penrhyn or Cefnfaes estates to whom ground rent was due; a high percentage of the houses also belonged directly to one or other of the estates (50) with 1,600 (51) of the men employed at the Penrhyn Quarries living on the Penrhyn Estate (52). In the village of Abergynolwyn "nearly all the village" belonged to the Bryneglwys Quarry Company according to the Quarry's manager in 1893. (53)

The ground rent charged and the implications of the leasehold system in general caused considerable resentment amongst the quarrymen. D.G. Williams of Blaenau Ffestiniog, for example, who paid 15/- ground rent, felt in 1885 that he was being overcharged by 14/6 since "before the house was built (the land) would not keep a hen alive." (54) In 1892 the North Wales Quarrymen's Union attacked

the Penrhyn Quarry Manager's evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour in the same vein. What, they asked, was

"the value of the boggy and rocky land on which...

(the houses) are built before these poor quarrymen put their labour, and their hard earned money, and their life-blood in them? (55)

And, moreover, it was added the "poor boggy mountain land... was common land in the recollection of some old inhabitants." (56)

It was, however, the other implications of the leasehold system, particularly the fact that when the lease was up the whole property reverted to the landlord, which agitated the quarrymen. Writing on the situation in Llanberis the Reverend G. Tecwyn Parry condemned,

"the oppression of paying £120 ground rent and then when the lease comes to an end the landlord claims everything as his own property - and there is all his labour in vain for him and his family; gone to enrich the landlord" (57).

It was a system which affected tenant farmer as well as quarryman (58) and its harsh logic was graphically explained by Lloyd George in 1903 for, adopting the landlord's voice he explained that,

"when you have built your house, it does not belong to you. Part of it will belong to me, and that part will grow year by year. I will have a few stones this year, and the stones will grow year by year, and I will take your house piece by piece. When you are an old man half of it will belong to me, and when you are dead it will pass to my sons, and not to yours." (59)

Money to buy or build a house was generally borrowed from one of the many building societies, there were over twenty in Bethesda in 1865, (60) money which was then paid back on a monthly basis. (61) Given this system it was hardly surprising that the quarrymen were enthusiastic campaigners for a change in the land laws.

Accounts of the condition of the housing tended to differ but it would appear that the situation improved somewhat after the late 1870s. Writing in 1875 a campaigning Inspector of Mines was harsh in his condemnation of living conditions in Blaenau Ffestiniog:

"the dwellings are overcrowded and badly ventilated, and the sleeping accommodation has been so deficient that instances have been common of the same beds having been slept in night and day without intermission by successive occupants. Rent is consequently high, and a cottage is often let in portions to several families who each pay for their rooms as much as would secure them a neat cottage and good garden in many parts of the Principality. The villages in which the miners live are in a filthy state, and the water used is not fit for culinary purposes. These conditions bring about the invariable result. Typhoid and other fevers are always present, and occasionally break out with extreme virulence." (62)

These were still boom years in the slate industry with new people still moving into the quarry towns in search of employment and before facilities were adequate. In the eighties and nineties the situation seems to have improved somewhat with a steep drop in cases of typhoid and typhus in Blaenau Ffestiniog between 1865-1874

and 1880-1890. (63)

The situation remained very unsatisfactory, however, with overcrowding and damp the main afflictions. Dr. Evan Roberts of Penygroes explained in 1893 that (64)

"in some places the houses are very small... there are not sufficient bedrooms very often, and they sleep three in a bed very often." (65)

Some of the older houses on the Penrhyn Estate were particularly small for

"there is one large room on the ground floor, with the walls about eight feet high, and one small room, generally called a "chamber", and above that there is a loft."

in such a house

"There is generally the husband and wife and three or four children." (66)

Dampness was a particular problem especially as North West Wales experiences very heavy rainfall: (67) a doctor in Blaenau Ffestiniog complained that

"our houses are faulty... no provision to prevent the evaporation of underground water... no system of drainage." (68)

Houses remained in short supply despite the depression in the (69) industry: there was, according to Dr. R.D. Evans of Blaenau Ffestiniog a "great scarcity of houses in Blaenau". Another witness before the Committee on Merionethshire Mines, William Williams, a rockman at the New Welsh Slate Co. explained that he lived at Minffordd over ten miles away from his place of work because housing was cheaper there as well as because he preferred

"to live in the country, as I do now, than among the rocks here."

By the 1890s improvements were being made to some of the older houses on the Penrhyn Estate by re-roofing them and putting in new doors and windows, the new houses that were built were also more spacious than the old. (70) And while, in Blaenau Ffestiniog, there remained in 1893 a "few deficient houses belonging to employers that should have been condemned long ago" (71) the sanitation had greatly improved with the houses having water or pail closets, the latter removed fortnightly, and slop drains fixed with properly tapped gullies; ashes and other refuse was also collected fortnightly and nearly every house had pure water piped to the houses, though a few still had wells. (72)

Conditions in the quarry barracks continued to be bad, however, and showed little improvement by the end of the century. Some 350 men lived in barracks in the Ffestiniog area in 1893 (73) and though the Local Board had intervened to cut down the number of men in each cubicle from six to four (74) it was generally agreed that the barracks, particularly those at the Rhosydd mine high up above Tanygrisiau, "required considerable improvements." (75)

Conditions at the barracks had been complained of by the Inspector of Mines in 1886 for there was in Rhosydd (76)

"scarcely 200 cubic feet of space per man in rooms used for sleeping, taking meals and keeping provisions and coal... the men were nearly all sleeping two in a bed, and some of the rooms were dark, with a bad floor and an indifferent roof." (77)

Conditions at the Oakley Quarry barracks appear to have been better with each man having his own sleeping room. (78) But in

1892 the Inspector of Mines again devoted a lengthy section of his report to the unsatisfactory conditions in some of the barracks:

"On more than one occasion I have said that the barracks in which some of the miners in my district have to spend the greater part of each week do not give the accommodation which, in my opinion, a respectable working man may fairly expect to receive; and I regret that owners of mines, who are ready to risk thousands of pounds in mineral adventures, do not realize the advisability of setting apart a small fraction of their capital for making their men more comfortable. I visited a mine where barracks were in the course of construction last year and I was surprised that the owner of the mine could ask men to put up with such housing. The inside walls were unplastered, and sleeping bunks were being fixed in the big room side by side without any intervening space. The passage at the end of the building, not partitioned off from the sleeping quarters, was destined to be the eating and living room. As the bunks were fixtures it was difficult to clean the space under them properly. The whole arrangements showed a great disregard of comfort and of the requirements of sanitary science." (79)

In such accommodation, for which they paid between 1½d and 3d a week, hundreds of quarrymen spent their non-working hours from Monday morning to Saturday afternoon. Some came from distant rural areas but others were forced to live in barracks because the mines or quarries at which they worked were so isolated.

Perched on a gale swept ridge between Cwm Cwmorthin, leading to Blaenau Ffestiniog five miles away, and Cwm Croesor, leading down to Llanfrothen miles in the opposite direction, life for the 200 workers at the Rhosydd mine must have been bleak and uncomfortable indeed, working and sleeping at over 1400 feet and washing in the mountain streams. (80)

As we have seen there were many who travelled long distances to and from their work; on a Monday morning Anglesey workers at the Dinorwic quarry would have to rise at 3. a.m., walk miles to the ferry at Moel y Don (it was about an hour's walk from Brynsiencyn, an area from where a number of quarrymen came) after crossing the Menai Straits there was another walk to the station before catching a train up to the quarry, arriving at 6.15 a.m. and then, after depositing their week's supplies at the barracks, straight to their labours. (81)

Conditions were hardly better for the over two hundred men who travelled to Blaenau Ffestiniog on the narrow gauge railway; (82) "May not the Ffestiniog Railway be to the quarryman a sort of pneumonia trap?" a doctor was asked, "Undoubtedly," he replied. (83)

Another doctor complained that many men had "really exhausted their muscular energy before they go to their day's work" because of the long journeys many of them had to undertake. Such men, he claimed, were "in a state of semi-starvation until they partake of their so-called dinner at mid-day." On the return journey they had to be "hanging about wet for hours at the station", all in all, the doctor concluded, these men were "treated more like animals than human beings." (84)

4. Diet, Dress and Health.

The quarryman's diet attracted considerable adverse comment from observers, the poor health of the quarryman being normally attributed to his eating habits: "In proportion to the wages they get," explained Mr. Frank Turner, the manager of the Glynrhonwy Slate Co. in 1893, "I think they are the worst fed men of any class in the kingdom" (85) and his opinion was supported by most of the doctors working in the quarrying areas. Of the doctors who gave evidence to the two commissions of inquiry in the early nineties or who contributed to Dr. John Williams' pamphlet "Peryglon i Iechyd y Chwarelwr" (Dangers to the health of the quarryman), only one, Dr. R.D. Evans of Blaenau Ffestiniog thought that the quarrymen did not live as sparingly as it was normally thought. (86)

But Dr. Evans was alone in his opinion, and the general medical verdict was that the quarrymen drank too much tea and ate very poor food. Heavy tea drinking appears to have been a particular characteristic of the quarryman, "tea for breakfast, tea for lunch, tea for tea and tea for supper", complained Dr. Jones of Penygroes (87); "they are too fond of tea and coffee at the quarry and never think of taking anything else" echoed the doctor in charge of the Penrhyn Quarry Hospital. (88) The tea they drank was, moreover, brewed in a particular and, in doctors' eyes harmful way, for it was the normal

"habit of the quarryman... to send a boy about half an hour before the meal time to an eating house, prepared by the owners for their comfort, with tea and sugar and water in the same kettle which is put on the fire and

boiled. It then stews there half an hour or more before the men come there to drink it. (89)

This constant drinking of stewed tea was clearly a stimulant (90) which made up for the scarcity of nourishing food; "he cannot work on bread with his meagre supply of butter", explained Dr. R.H. Mills Robers, surgeon to the Dinorwic Quarries Hospital", and (he) therefore endeavours to stimulate himself by means of tea" (91).

For, apart from constant tea drinking, the rest of the quarryman's diet was poor: a diet typical of the "best class" of quarryman, of "those who take most care of themselves" consisted of tea, egg and bread and butter for breakfast; tea and bread and butter for lunch; bread and butter at teatime; potatoes, sometimes with beef, bacon or buttermilk on arriving home around 6.30 p.m. and sometimes porridge or buttermilk or coffee before going to bed at 10; on Sunday there would be lunch of "potatoes and meat and some kind of tart". (92) It is clear, however, that many quarrymen never approached even such a diet; Thomas Hugh Griffith a quarryman at the Penyrorsedd Quarry in the Nantlle Valley, for example never had an egg for breakfast but only tea, bread and butter. (93) Dr. Mills Robers of Dinorwic considered that the majority of quarrymen ate only tea, bread and butter for Breakfast, Dinner, Tea and Supper, and though "sometimes he may have in addition a little cheese, potatoes, or bacon... this is the exception." (94) "The people here need more food, especially more nourishing food. They only seem to get meat once a week; that is to say, on Sunday" exclaimed an English cooking instructress in Blaenau Ffestiniog. (95) A glaring deficiency in the diet was the lack of vegetables, and of dairy produce: "they do not take enough vegetables" complained

Dr. Evan Roberts of Penygroes, (96) while Dr. Mills Roberts complained of how little milk was consumed. (97) In this respect and in others the quarryman's diet was compared unfavourably with that of agricultural workers, "the agricultural labourer" explained Dr. Roberts

"eats good coarse flour, which is much more wholesome.

The quarryman on the other hand eats too fine a flour." (98) and Dr. Jones, also of Penygroes, pointed out that the whitest bread, preferred by the quarrymen, was not nutritionally the most desirable. (99) In this respect it is clear that to some extent, at least, the quarryman's diet was a matter of preference, a conscious choice of foods preferred to the more wholesome food of agricultural workers. As Dr. Roberts pointed out,

"they could get plenty of sweet-milk, or butter-milk to drink, but they have got into the habit of drinking tea at every meal. They have no relish for any liquid but tea. It is tea all day long," (100)

To satisfy this peculiar quarryman's trait a special tea was packaged locally and marketed under the label "Te'r Chwarelwr" (The Quarryman's Tea) (101).

The quarryman's dress was even more distinctive than his diet: corduroy trousers, hob-nailed boots and flat cap came to be the distinctive badge of the quarryman in the twentieth century but in the nineteenth the quarryman's normal dress was of white fustian with

"a thick flannel vest, a flannel shirt, generally

lined, flannel drawers, usually double thickness round the waist, and in addition he generally also wears round the waist a flannel belt or bandage", (102) though a thin leather belt appears to have been more popular. In addition the quarryman on his way to work invariably wore a bowler hat and carried an umbrella.

In dress and diet therefore the quarryman was distinctively marked as separate from his neighbours. These were questions of choice. He also carried other involuntary, badges of his identity, in particular, his ill-health. A Ffestiniog doctor explained in 1893 that,

"we do not meet with very many people in Ffestiniog who are what we call robust" (103)

and a Llanberis doctor concurred for "their muscular development is very poor and their health is not what it should be" (104).

The main complaints suffered by the men were respiratory diseases, stomach disorders, hernias and haemorrhoids. The haemorrhoids were caused by long hours of sitting on hard, cold surfaces (for the slate-splitters) while hernias were brought on by the very strenuous nature of much of the work, the stomach disorders were attributed to poor diet and in particular to the over-imbibing of tea. (105) Respiratory diseases were the major complaint however: of 157 male death certificates Dr. R.D. Evans of Blaenau Ffestiniog signed in the period before he gave evidence to the Departmental Committee upon Merionethshire Slate Mines in 1893, 78 had died of some respiratory disease i.e., almost exactly 50%. Of 129 female deaths only 31 had been struck down in a similar way. (106) Doctors

explained this high rate of respiratory disease by pointing to such factors as the wet climate of the area, to the dampness of the houses, to poor diet etc., some pointed to the cold and wet conditions the men often had to work in and a few suggested that slate dust might be a contributory factor; Dr. Richard Jones of Ffestiniog for example, thought that slate dust might be "an irritant - perhaps sets up inflammation which will lead to chronic pthisis". ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ But the weight of medical opinion suggested poor living conditions rather than occupational hazards as being the main cause of poor health; one doctor even suggested that the quarryman's habit of assembling in hundreds to escort the coffin of a neighbour on its final journey was the major cause of disease: "I have had more cases which could be attributable to exposure at funerals than to working at the quarries" he stated. (108)

Figures seem to suggest otherwise. The mean age at death of those registered in Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1883-93 as "quarriers" i.e., those employed in the dressing sheds where slate dust was most heavy was 47.9; the average age of death for engine drivers and plate layers in the quarries, those least exposed to slate dust, was 60.3; labourers could expect to live until they were 54.3, while rockmen and miners could only look forward to a couple more months than the quarriers, 48.1 years. (109) No wonder a witness before the Committee of Merionethshire Mines who remarked that few quarrymen continued after 60 years of age was asked "Do they retire or die?" (110) Slate makers died young; in the New Welsh Slate Mine in January 1893, the average age of all the workers

was 34.4, the average age of the slate-makers was 28.7, out of 78 of them employed, only 13 were over 40. (111) And yet the slatemaker's craft was the most skilled in the quarry, the work being less physically exhausting than that of the rockman.

The quarrymen themselves seemed to have been in little doubt that slate dust was injurious to their health: "the men complain of dust", observed Dr. Richard Jones,

"they think that the dust is the cause of their illness, and many of them seem to believe that if they take a drink to wash the dust out of their mouth they improve their condition - say a glass of beer or water." (112)

Some doctors suspected that there might be something in the men's complaint; William Gadlys Williams, a 40 year old quarryman who had spent 30 years in the industry and spat up slate dust every morning explained that Dr. Hughes of Waenfawr had confirmed that the dust was injurious to him. (113)

But some medical opinion took an opposite view, Dr. R.D. Mills Robers, surgeon to the Dinorwic Quarries and Hospital, for example, considered "this occupation to be very healthy, indeed exceptionally so, "slate dust" he remarked, "does not exist at the Dinorwic Quarries to an injurious extent" and he scoffed at the quarryman who "will not open his windows... and fancies that this foul air is healthier than the slate-dust." (114) Not all doctors went to Dr. Mills Robers' lengths in portraying slate quarries as second only to health spas in their therapeutic blessings, "the healthiest possible employment" he called it, but few of them drew particular attention to conditions of work as a

cause of ill-health; diet, housing and other factors were more generally blamed by the doctors who gave evidence to the two committees of inquiry and who contributed to Dr. John William's pamphlet. Only one doctor, Dr. John Roberts, went on to condemn in highly political language the social and economic conditions which underlay the men's poor health. A remarkable letter which he sent to Dr. John William in January 1890, of which only a section was published in William's pamphlet, deserves extensive quotation: (115)

"My first impression regarding Welsh quarrymen is that their hard lot produces premature decay and old age - very frequently affecting particular tissues, often causing a general withering. God turns them out a very even lot as babies; look at them above sixty as they pour out of a large quarry, and pray that the Almighty may give them sense and knowledge to understand what has produced the awful change.

My second impression regarding them is that they suffer from low forms of ordinary diseases as well as from diseases that are degenerative in their nature. How rarely do we meet with the typical pneumonia of our old classical authors with its nasty sputum and short duration and quick and complete recovery, and how frequently with latent typhoid forms of it with lasting consolidation and incomplete recovery. And how terribly numerous are the tubercular class of affliction that produces their premature death and how frequently they die when a well fed man would recover. I will not enlarge to you on these points... it

seems to be their lot to die young of consumptive diseases, while their English masters die of gout and apoplexy, with white hair and rubicund faces above sixty."

In the following paragraph this eloquent and angry doctor switches to Welsh and continues,

"The worst thing is that the poor creatures do not know why their stomachs are empty nor why they die so young, their 'education' is limited to such questions as "who was the first man" and other such useless rubbish."

After some further medical reflections he outlines his non-medical remedies;

"My remedial measures will suggest themselves to you " when I have told you that the hard lot of the quarryman causes him to suffer in the way he does. Let him join me and others and attempt to change the economic condition that entail upon him, disease, poverty, sin and death before his proper time. Let the Quarryman work for himself and his family and give up working in poverty and crime to supply idlers with more wealth than they can legitimately use....

Christianity has utterly failed to make mankind honest or happy under present economic conditions. The ? wealth cannot fill the workers stomach and go in the form of oats

to supply racehorses as well. The thing is impossible.

The quarryman to be healthy must get the wealth he creates by his own labour for his own use.

Science and experience teach that disease, sin and death are the unavoidable results of a system that enables idlers to take it from him."

We know little of Dr. Roberts and nothing of the "others" he refers to, who also wished to "change the economic condition", but the ideas he puts forward in his letter would certainly suggest that North West Wales was not as completely immune to socialist ideas in the 1890s as it has been generally thought to be.

Working conditions were certainly bad and subsequent medical research has confirmed that the quarrymen were perfectly correct in their belief that slate dust was harmful despite the opinions of some of the local doctors. Those working underground were saved the extremes of temperature and weather suffered by open quarrymen (slate heats up and cools down very rapidly) but they often worked in very wet conditions by the light of spluttering candles which emitted "such a bad smell that they cannot eat at dinner time"; (116) Privies were few and inadequate as were eating facilities. Those working in the sheds seem to have suffered the most: immobile because of their work they could not exercise sufficiently to resist the cold and they were, of course, covered in slate dust. (117) Slate quarrying was not as healthy as agricultural work, stated another quarryman, Thomas Hugh Griffith

who had worked in Penyrorsedd Quarry for 50 years, "because there is slate dust." (118)

"Do you consider quarrying a healthy occupation?" H.H. Davies was asked... his reply was emphatic: "No, I do not indeed." (119) He was right: the average age of men ^{not} working in the slate mines who died in Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1875 was 67.12 years, the average age of those who had died in the same year and had also laboured in the mines was 37.78 years. (120)

Ill-health was not the only cause of early death, the slate quarries were also extremely hazardous places to work in. In 1877 the then Inspector of Mines responsible for the underground slate mines of North Wales, T.F. Evans, reported that,

"it has not perhaps occurred to the slate mine owners of Wales that their workmen are exposed to greater danger than the coal miners of the U.K. " (121)

This view was supported three years later by his successor C. Le Neve Foster who estimated that

"the average death rate from accidents underground is nearly twice as high in the slate mines as in other mines of my district... as far as safety is concerned it is better to work in a colliery than in an underground slate mine." (122)

They still remained dangerous a decade later when it was reported that the proportion of deaths from accidents in slate mining in North Wales "is from 1.75 to 2 per thousand against 1 to 1.50 per thousand in metalliferous mines." (123) The underground mines had come under the provisions of the various Metalliferous Mines

Regulation Acts of 1872, 1875, in 1875 and under the Slate Mines (Gunpowder) Act in 1882, while the dressing sheds of both open and underground quarries came under the provision of the various Factory Acts. The open slate quarries, in which the majority of slate quarrymen worked, remained, however, outside the scope of any effective legislation. They were lethal places in which, between 1883 and 1892, out of a workforce of only some 8,500, one hundred and sixteen men lost their lives in accidents. (124)

Accidents were normally caused by rockfalls, and mishaps with the use of explosives, but danger lurked in all corners of the quarry. (125) Two men were killed every year in the Dinorwic Quarries during the seven years from 1878 to 1885, twelve died in the following seven; a total of twenty six killed at their work in one quarry in fourteen years. (126) These figures might well be inadequate for the cause of death was often vague and quarry doctors seemed not to have been particularly conscientious in their recording of death. (127) In the underground mines the provisions of the Mines Acts demanded somewhat more precise explanations for accidents and all fatalities were investigated by the Inspector of Mines. Both T.F. Evans and his successor C. Le Neve Foster appear to have been sound and conscientious inspectors, Foster, in particular, included some bitter criticisms of conditions in the industry in his annual reports. The quarrymen thought he was good, though not good enough, (128), and the N.W.Q.U. campaigned energetically for a Welsh speaking and "practical", i.e., ex-quarryman, inspectorate which could communicate properly with the men and also be acquainted with the myriad complexities of the industry.

The mine-owners had originally opposed the application of the Mines Acts to slate-mining and had only been forced to accept the Act's jurisdiction after a court case, *Sims V. Evans*, in 1874 which had resulted in the ruling that "a slate quarry, worked by means of underground workings by levels, is a mine within the intention of 35 and 36 Vict. c.77." (129)

Inspection of the mines remained infrequent, however, and the fines imposed by magistrates upon law-breaking mine-owners were negligible. The Welsh Slate Co. was taken to court by the Inspector in 1876 for a relatively serious offence - a failure to have a plan of the mine; they were fined 2/6d by the local bench which, the Inspector commented ruefully, was "all slate mine proprietors." (130)

The quarrymen complained, in particular, about the verdicts of jurors in inquests on men killed at their work. It was not so much prejudice as ignorance which they criticized for "the jurymen at inquests... are made up of shopkeepers and other tradesmen, who are not familiar with the terms used in the quarry." (131) There were also complaints of witnesses not being called (132) and of men who did not give full accounts at inquests as

"they fear that if they told the truth it might cause them inconvenience in the quarry." (133)

A great deal depended upon the judgement of under-agents and doctors. The first could be relied upon to emphasise the dead quarryman's negligence in any accident, the latter's testimony could also often be expected to stress the same angle.

For in such an unhealthy and dangerous industry medical services, at least in the larger quarries, were directly linked to the works. There were hospitals at Penrhyn and Dinorwic and also at Llechwedd and Oakeley for injured and sick quarrymen. These had been originally established by the owners but were largely maintained by quarry sick clubs to which all the men employed contributed. (134) Other quarries had similar schemes to provide medical care though they did not support hospitals.

Men normally paid 1/- a week (135) towards the clubs and in return received free medical care, some money weekly during absence from work caused by injury or illness, burial expenses and, in some cases, pensions. During 1889 the Dinorwic Club paid out a total of £584 to 1634 club members, about half the workforce, a figure which, in itself, indicates the risk to health run by quarrymen; the sums received varied from 3/- to £5.12.0d. In addition 33 men, of whom three died, received treatment in the Quarry Hospital. The resident doctor, then Dr. Hughes, was employed at a wage of £550 per annum. (136)

Many men also belonged to various friendly societies, both local and national, which also contributed during illness: the Ffestiniog Friendly Society in 1895 paid 8/- a week for the first 6 months of illness and 4/- a week from then on. (137)

Given conditions in the industry independent medical opinion was of some importance. Quarrymen in Blaenau Ffestiniog in the late 1860s had successfully agitated against compulsory membership of quarry sick clubs as they did not trust doctors appointed by the quarry owners; a workmen's committee was set up which employed its own doctor but some quarries insisted that the men pay their 1/- a month to the "official" club. (138) The Penrhyn Sick

Club was a matter of bitter dispute for a quarter of a century with accusations of pilfering and mismanagement complicating the issue of control. Assheton Smith and his manager W.W. Vivian also clearly had decisive control over the Dinorwic Club, the committee of which they both sat on. The 'independence' of doctors is a difficult quality to define particularly when they had been and were employed and chosen by willful and powerful men. Comparing the two commissions which investigated the quarryman's health in the early 1890s one can, however, distinguish a somewhat more critical awareness of the problems in the comments of doctors before the committee on Merionethshire Slate Mines than in the subsequent investigation of the open slate quarries of Caernarfonshire. An awareness which might have owed something to the lack of quarry owners' monopoly-control of medical care in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

It has been noted earlier how Dr. Mills Robens of Dinorwic, in particular, testified to the healthy nature of slate quarrying. A question mark must remain over the sincerity of his remarks in the light of a letter he wrote to W.W. Vivian in November 1893, presumably when he was preparing the evidence he was to submit before the committee of inquiry; in the letter he wrote,

"My visit to Caernarfon is not of much service.

Respiratory diseases among women being 449, among males not quarrymen 375; against 506 quarrymen. So that is best left alone." (139)

Referring to these figures, he adds, "I hope you will sit on them."

The question of the control of doctors was not a central

one for the quarrymen but it was a continuing source of complaint. In another part of Britain, however, the question of who appointed the men's doctor, the owner or the men's committee, led to a prolonged strike in 1903 in the large slate mine in Ballachulish, (140) not far from Glencoe in Argyllshire.

CHAPTER I The Quarryman and his Community.

1. Introduction

1. This brief sketch of the industry's history relies in a large part on David Dylan Pritchard's excellent articles in the Quarry Managers' Journal, July 1942-October 1946. For other accounts of the slate industry see A.H. Dodd, The Industrial Revolution in North Wales (1951), pp. 203-222; Jean Lindsay, A History of the North Wales Slate Industry. (1974).
2. Beriah Evans, "Mountain Mining", The Times Trade Supplement, 29.10.1921.
3. W.D. Hobson, "The North Wales Slate Industry" in The Welsh Housing and Development Year Book, (1918), ed. E.L. Chappell, p. 97.
4. Slate in the U.S.A. was quarried primarily in Pennsylvania, though there were also sizeable deposits in Vermont and smaller workings in many other states, see T. Nelson Dale, et al., Slate in the U.S. (Department of the Interior U.S. Geological Survey) (1914). In France the main slate producing areas were Anger in Anjou and Fumay in the Ardennes; slate was also worked in Basse-Bretagne. There were also significant deposits in Belgium (the Bassin d'Herbenmont), Portugal, Italy, Norway.
5. General Summary of the Mineral Statistics, 1882. p. 7.

6. F.J. North, The Slates of Wales (1925), p. 39-40

See Fig. 1.

7. Census Returns 1851-1911; D. Dylan Pritchard, "Aspects of the Slate Industry, No. 2", QMJ, June 1943, p. 471.

2). An Industrial Community

8. W.J. Gruffydd, Hen Atgofion. (1942), p. 84. W.J. Gruffydd was one of Wales' leading literary figures in the twentieth century.

9. A.H. Dodd, The Industrial Revolution in North Wales. (1951), p. 203.

10. Bethesda - The Official Guide (1938)

11. Gwynedd Archive Service, Tregarth National School Log Book, 8.7.1901.

12. The Dinorwic Lock-Out. published by the Strike Cttee. 1885

13. Royal Commission on Labour, Minutes of Evidence, Group A II, 1892 xxxvi, 19.1.1892, question 9449.

14. Robert Griffith, aged 30 in 1871, lived on his uncle's 15 acre holding in the Nantlle Valley while he himself worked in the quarries; his neighbour Robert Hughes was also a quarryman living on his brother's 40 acre farm, Pentrebach.

Census Returns (1871) County of Caernarfon, Parish of Llanwnda, District No. 27.

15. Report by the Quarry Committee of Inquiry, Parliamentary Papers, C-7237, 1893-4, lxxiii, p. 195.
16. Royal Commission on Labour, Minutes of Evidence Group A II, 1892, question 9410 - 19.1.1892.
17. Some of those referred to must have been from the parish of Llanfrothen, an area of scattered agricultural holdings some miles from a major quarry where, as early as 1841, almost half the men were employed in the slate quarries and lived in cottages with some land; by the end of the century most of the men of the parish earned their living in the quarries but they also maintained their holdings. In the northern half of the parish 45 men worked in the quarries, 56 in agriculture; in the south of the parish the agricultural hold was more obvious with 56 men employed in agriculture and 15 in the slate quarries. With improved transport to Blaenau Ffestiniog later in the century and the establishing of the quarrying hamlet of Croesor the number of quarrymen increased.
Census Returns (1841), County of Merioneth, Parish of Llanfrothen.
18. A local historian, Ioan Brothen, himself a quarryman, wrote in 1906 that "the majority of the men work in the various slate quarries. Many who work in them also hold a cottage and they work on their cottages every opportunity they can get such as Saturday afternoons, the end of the (quarry)

month and in the summer months in the evenings after a day at work".

GAS. Z/M/522, Ioan Brothen, "Hanes Plwyf Llanfrothen".

19. J. Owen Jones, "Quarrying at Bethesda", Wales, vol. 1. (1894), p. 167.

20. Royal Commission on Labour, Minutes of Evidence, question 16,846.

21. According to E.A. Young, manager of the Penrhyn Quarries, many quarrymen also had,

"certain rights on the mountains for grazing according to the amount of rent, they are allowed to graze so many sheep or ponies on the mountain free".

ibid. Note the contradiction regarding how "free" these rights were.

22. Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Mon. First Report 1894, xxxvi, p. 431, evidence of Cadwaladar Roberts.

23. ibid., evidence of Cadwaladar Williams 10,072.

24. The situation varied depending upon local circumstances.

Writing of Bethesda one observer commented that the quarryman's "hereditary love of the land has not been lost amid the sunless caverns of Snowdonia. A cottage and a piece of land seem necessary to his happiness and ambition, and

to the latter he devotes his leisure hours with meritorious assiduity."

(A.G. Bradley, Highways and Byways in North Wales, (1919) p. 258).

25. See for example the threatening letter sent to Evan Evans by someone writing on behalf of the tenants of a farm (Dolmoch in Maentwrog, Ffestiniog) who were forced to leave the farm to make room for Evans.
- "I swear through this that if you go to live to the place you have taken that you will have only a short time to live, and that you will die the most pitiable of the children of man not on the land you desire to die on, but in a place where they will not find your corpse until the birds of the air have eaten a part of it so that there will be enough of the judgement of almighty God upon you for your wicked deeds."

GAS (Police Letter Book, Towyn, 28.2.1871.)

26. Royal Commission on Land, question 10,484.
27. Royal Commission on Labour, The Agricultural Labourer Vol. 2 Wales, Appendix C. p. 107. In Caernarfonshire in 1885 there were 4,756 holdings under 50 acres and only 5 over 500 acres. (D. Ll. Thomas, The Welsh Land Commission, (1896).
28. Ioan Brothen, op. cit.
29. W.J. Gruffydd, op. cit., p. 30.

30. Emyr Jones, Canrif y Chwarelwr, (1963), p. 41.
31. A differentiation accentuated by craft differences in the quarries.
32. Royal Commission on Labour, Summary Report by D. Lleufer Thomas.
33. Royal Commission on Labour, Evidence of Nathaniel F. Roberts, 9410.
34. Report of the Departmental Committee upon Merionethshire Slate Mines, 1895, evidence of Dr. R.D. Evans, 1704.
35. Royal Commission on Labour, The Agricultural Labourer, Appendix C, evidence of Hugh Roberts. p. 107.
36. In 1894 an observer noted the particular wealth of Bethesda gardens,

"it is not often that one meets with gardens so neatly and carefully done, - with their rows of gooseberry trees, the currant trees along the garden walls, an apple tree here and there, the short rows of beans and peas, and the beds of lettuces, radishes, onions and cress, and the cabbage, cauliflowers, and turnips in their seasons."

J. Owen Jones, op. cit. p. 167.
37. Report of Inspector of Mines, 1875, (1876 xxl11) 292.
38. The Nantlle Vale Annual Show, held in Penygroes, catered for both normal agricultural pursuits and the small

scale gardening and pet breeding popular with quarrymen; in 1904 apart from the usual agricultural classifications of horses, cattle and farm produce there were also 22 classes of poultry to be judged, 17 classes of dogs, 9 classes of pigeons, 7 of cage birds and a competition for rabbits; for the horticultural contest there were 70 separate classes. The show also had slate splitting (3 classes) and sett making (2 classes) competitions. GAS Dorothea 1655, Nantlle Vale Annual Show, List of Prizes, August 20. 1904.

39. All the figures in this section are taken from the Census Returns for 1851, 1861, 1871. Out of a population of 126,883 in Caernarfonshire in 1901, 114,061 had been born in Wales and 96,712 born in the county of Caernarfon. In the parish of Ffestiniog in 1851 the population over 20 was drawn overwhelmingly from Merionethshire (4,616 born in the county) and Caernarfonshire (3,321 born in the county). The remaining 314 people over 20 were drawn in almost equal numbers from Denbighshire and Anglesey.
40. Of 659 people, 548 had been born in Caernarfonshire of whom 229 had been born in the parish of Llanddwrog and 319 outside the parish. Of the 32 born outside of Wales, 14 were from Liverpool, 4 from other parts of Lancashire, 5 from Ireland, 2 from Salop, 2 from Staffordshire and one each from Cornwall, Cheshire, Gloucestershire, London

and the Isle of Man.

41. This does not mean that there was not a degree of movement out of ^{or} between the quarrying districts. Emigration was always a significant feature of these communities (see pp. 180-1) and some men certainly did move in and out of the slate villages: John Ellis Roberts of Tanygrisiau, a slatemaker for forty years had worked both in Caernarfon and in Ffestiniog; David W. Jones of Penrhyndeudraeth had worked "off and on" in Cwmarthin mine for 13 years, moved away to work in coal mining for 5 or 6 years and then returned to Cwmarthin for another 13 years; John Roberts of Wesley Street, Blaenau Ffestiniog, a rockman and miner for 20 years had worked in gold and coal mines before returning to the Oakeley. Many other quarrymen moved from one quarry to another within a particular district: William Cadwaladar Williams of Newmarket Square, Blaenau Ffestiniog had worked in Upper Oakeley, Wrysgan and Cwmarthin^o while David Jones, of Manod Road, had worked "in a great many quarries in this district". (Report... Merionethshire Slate Mines. Evidence 1249, 3169, 3419, 1143, 3282.) The tendency was, however, for quarrymen to stay for long periods in the one quarry.
42. Morris Griffith, aged 33 in 1851, had been born in Llanbeblig near Caernarfon, Hugh Hughes came from Llanllechid (Bethesda) and Ellis Williams from Llandwrog (Nantlle); they all moved to work in the quarries near Corris, married local women and settled there. See also evidence of Meyrick Roberts, Manager of Bryneglwys

Quarry that the slatemakers in the Abergynolwyn - Corris area came originally from Llanllyfni. (Report... Merionethshire Mines, Evidence of M. Roberts. 4276).

43. In 1895, 177 men travelled to Blaenau Ffestiniog daily from Penrhyndeudraeth, 25 came from Minffordd, 20 from Porthmadog and some from Tanybwllch. (Report Merionethshire Mines, Evidence of Dr. R.D. Evans, 1648.)
44. GAS DQ 1560 see p.213
45. Emyr Jones, op. cit. p. 41.
46. Royal Commission on Labour. Trade Unionism among Agricultural Labourers, Vol. 2 Wales, District Reports by D. Lleufer Thomas, 1893-4. (36) Anglesey, 20.
47. ibid. Pwllheli. 19.
- 3) HOUSING
48. Report... Merionethshire Mines, Evidence of Henry Percy Maybury, surveyor of Ffestiniog Local Board.
49. G. Tecwyn Parry, Llanberis. Ei Hanes, Ei Phobl, Ei Phethau. (1908), pp. 26, 114, 120.
50. Report by the Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence of Hugh H. Davies, 2092.
51. Royal Commission on Labour, Evidence of E.A. Young, 16, 844.

52. The estate's housing stock consisted of 390 leasehold houses with a garden and an average rental of £1 per annum, 540 houses with gardens at a rent of £3-10-0 per annum and 168 houses with land sufficient to keep a cow at £6.

ibid., 16845-16846.
53. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of M. Roberts, 4261.
54. Cambrian News. 28.8.1885.
55. W.J. Parry, The Penrhyn Lock-Out, (1901) p. 61.
56. ibid.
57. G. Tecwyn Parry, op. cit., p. 120.
58. Similarly in Bethesda the quarrymen claimed that of the 1,100 houses on Lord Penrhyn's estate he had,

"not built 60 of these. The remainder are the result of the labour and investment of his workmen, who in this manner return to him their hard earned wages, besides, vastly increasing the value of his property and adding materially to his rent roll."

Parry, op. cit., p. 61.
59. D. Lloyd George, "Trusts and Monopolies" (speech in Newcastle, 4.4.1903).

Better Times (1910).

60. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 9.12.1865.
61. G. Tecwyn Parry, op. cit., p. 26.
62. Report of H.M. Inspector of Mines for North Wales, and Isle of Man District No. 9. 1875, p. 384.
63. In 1865-74 the percentage of deaths from typhus and typhoid was 12.6 per annum, in the 1880s this fell to 1.3 per cent., a drop largely explained by the piping of fresh water to the town from the new reservoir at Llyn Morwynion.
(Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Dr. Richard Jones. 111.)
64. Report... Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence of Dr. E. Roberts, 102.
65. William Gadlys Williams, a 40 year old quarryman, described his own house (with which he also had "not quite three acres of land") as having "two rooms on the ground floor, and those above have very little headroom"; one bedroom was two square yards, the other three and the ceiling sloped up from 2ft off the floor to a height of 6ft. In this house lived a family of seven which included William Williams' father and brother.
ibid., evidence of William Gadlys Williams, 928-950.
66. ibid., evidence of H.H. Davies, 2094, 2095.

67. Blaenau Ffestiniog suffers almost 100 inches of rain per annum.
68. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Dr. R. Jones, 54.
69. The surveyor of the Ffestiniog Local Board in 1893 explained that though the majority of houses were commodious and comparatively new, having been built during the previous twenty years, many were damp due to their positions near rocks rising up behind them.
ibid., 4198.
70. Report... Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence of H.H. Davies, 2101, 2102.
71. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Dr. R.D. Evans, 1649.
72. ibid., evidence of H.P. Maybury, 4198.
73. ibid.
74. ibid., evidence of Dr. R. Jones, 70.
75. ibid., evidence of H.P. Maybury, 4202.
76. Report of Inspector of Mines, 1886.
77. His warnings as to the roof, ironic comment on a building at a slate mine, were proved to be well founded, five years later in November 1890 when a storm ripped off the roof during the night and the men, half naked and clutching their beds, had to flee in what a local newspaper

called a "miraculous escape."

Y Rhedegydd, 15.11.1890.

78. Report Inspector of Mines, 1886.
79. ibid., 1892, p. 406.
80. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of H.P. Maybury, 4209, 4247. Conditions at barracks in the Ffestiniog area were attacked again by the Inspector of Mines in 1900.
81. Emyr Jones, op. cit., p. 41.
82. They travelled sixteen to a carriage, 10ft 7 inches long by 4ft 9 inches wide. Not only were they, in the words of the report of the 1895 Departmental Committee upon Merionethshire Slate Mines, "much overcrowded", but they were also open to wind and rain as the carriages were open behind their necks.
Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Dr. R.D. Evans, 1648.
83. ibid., evidence of Dr. R. Jones, 91.
84. ibid., evidence of Dr. R.D. Evans, 1648.
He cited the case of a man walking from his home in Tremadoc to the station in Porthmadoc, sitting in the overcrowded and windy conditions of the train on the long journey to Blaenau Ffestiniog and then having to walk again the steep miles to one of the further quarries such as Votty and Bowydd or Cwmerthin.

4) Diet, Dress and Health

85. Report... Quarry Committee of Inquiry,
evidence of Mr. Frank Turner, 570.
86. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Dr. R.D. Evans,
1649.
"I do not think", he said in 1893 of Blaenau Ffestiniog,
"that there is a town in North Wales of its population
in which the inhabitants eat so much meat and drink
so much milk." He estimated that 1800-1900 gallons of
milk and 15 tons of meat were sold in the town every week.
87. Dr. John Williams, Peryglon i Iechyd y Chwarelwr, (1891),
p. 6.
88. Report... Quarry Committee, evidence of Dr. J. William,
267.
89. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Dr. Richard Jones,
64.
90. The alternative was to "take tea in their cans in the
morning... leave it in the cans and drink out of them
at intervals throughout the day."
Report... Quarry Committee, evidence of Dr. Evan Roberts, 74.
91. *ibid.*, evidence of Dr. R.H. Mills Roberts.
92. *ibid.*, evidence of William Gadlys Williams and Hugh Griffith.

93. *ibid.*, evidence of Thomas Hugh Griffith.
94. *ibid.*, evidence of Dr. R.H. Mills Roberts.
95. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Miss Eleanor H. Russell, 4132.
96. Report... Quarry Committee, evidence of Dr. Evan Roberts, 82.
97. *ibid.*, evidence of Dr. Mills Robens, 737.
98. *ibid.*
99. Dr. John William. *op. cit.*, p. 7.
100. Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence of Dr. E. Roberts, 76.
Even quarrymen "who have a cow or two prefer to take tea in their cans in the morning rather than milk". *ibid.*, 74.
101. Advertised in GAS Dorothea 1655, (List of Prizes, Nantlle Vale Annual Show, 1904).
102. Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence of Dr. R.H. Mills Roberts.
103. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Dr. R. Roberts, 1115.
104. Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence of Dr. R.H. Mills Roberts.
105. Dr. John William, *op. cit.*
106. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Dr. R.D. Evans, 1648.

107. *ibid.*, evidence of Dr. R. Jones. 54.

But he had no real evidence for this since he did "not know of anyone who has performed a post-mortem examination of the lung of a quarryman in this district".

108. Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence of R. Evan Roberts, 38.

109. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Dr. R. Jones. 6-9.

110. *ibid.*, 108.

111. *ibid.*, Appendix 6, workmen employed at the New Welsh Slate Mine, January, 1893.

112. *ibid.*, evidence of Dr. R. Jones. 160.

The only consequence of the drink was that the dust "gets into a state of clay, and clings to the roof of the mouth."

113. Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence of W.G. Williams, 982.

"The slate dust get's into one's stomach" stated H.H. Davies to the Quarry Committee of Inquiry, "how do you know that?" he was asked, "the doctors say so for one thing", he replied, "and it tells on the men themselves". *ibid.*, evidence of H.H. Davies.

114. *ibid.*, evidence of R.H. Mills Roberts.

115. GAS DQ 2537, letter from John Roberts to John Williams, 7.1.1890.

He went on to prudently advise William that he should
"Disclaim all responsibility for yourself for what

I say if you honour me with quotation. It
is honestly given to you."

116. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Robert Roberts, 3058.
117. "After you have been working in one of those huts all day long, are you covered with dust?" H.H. Davies was asked by a member of the 1893 Committee of Inquiry, "Yes", he replied. "Everywhere?" "Yes", "One side of the sheds is open?" - "Yes, and they are built very loosely, so that the draught comes through".
Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence of H.H. Davies, 2062, 2066.
118. ibid., evidence of T.H. Griffith, 1388.
119. ibid., H.H. Davies, 2059.
120. Report of H.M. Inspector of Mines, 1875.
121. ibid., 1877.
122. ibid., 1880.
123. Royal Commission on Labour, evidence of N.F. Roberts, 9473.
124. Quarry Committee of Inquiry, Caernarfonshire Slate Quarries at work in 1893, Merionethshire Open Slate Quarries.
125. Rowland Jones died in the Dinorwic Quarry at the age of 15 years 3 months on the 17th of May, 1898, after he was thrown over an incline by a wagon of slate waste he was

pushing; Owen Roberts of Llandinorwic bled to death in Twll Mwg in the same quarry on July 30th, 1902, after bursting a blood vessel, he was twenty three years old. GAS DQ 2019, 1560.

126. DQ 2524.

127. When asked in December 1893 about fatal accidents in the Penrhyn Quarry during the previous twelve months, Dr. John William of the Penrhyn Quarry Hospital could recall that there had been three fatalities, one he remembered was due to the Man's "negligence" but he said, "I forget now what the other's were."

Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence of Dr. J. William, 263.

Robert Roberts of Cym-y-Glo was a 74 year old patient in the Dinorwic Quarry Hospital who was declared to have "died suddenly of syncope" on February 24th 1892; he had in fact entered the hospital on January 12th with "all ribs on left side fractured, also collar bone, three ribs on right side fractured. Laceration of right kidney; laceration of left lung, pneumonia suspected." Injuries received whilst at his work; we do not know the circumstances of his accident as the official report prepared by the management was brief to the point of being useless. A slip which "explains cause of accident" reads as follows:

"He was splitting a block of slate when a portion of it fell upon him. He was taken to the Hospital,

and subsequently died of syncope, February 24.

Widower Aged 74." GAS DQ 2540, 21/11/93, 12/1/92.

128. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Owen Rowland Jones, 1367.
129. Report... Inspector of Mines, 1875. p. 383.
130. A case brought by the Inspector after two men had been killed in the Cwmorthin mine was dismissed in 1892. Following an accident in which a young man had been killed by a runaway wagon in the Maen Offeren mine the company were prosecuted for not providing manholes along the tramway; found guilty they were fined 2/6d with 10/9d costs.
- Report... Inspector of Mines, 1876, 1892, 1893.
- The owners of the Llechwedd Mine were fined £1 without costs for similar offence in 1885 (Y Gweithiwr, 23.5.1885.)
131. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of O.R. Jones, 1296.
132. *ibid.*
133. *ibid.*, evidence of John Hughes, 334, 5.
134. The owners often contributed sizeable sums of money to the sick clubs. Assheton-Smith, for example, gave £50, his "annual gift", to the Dinorwic Quarry Club in 1889, (Adroddiad Clwb Chwarelau Dinorwic Am 1889, GAS DQ 2524.
135. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of Dr. R. Roberts 1062.

136. Adroddiad Clwb Chwarelau Dinorwic Am 1889.
137. GAS Z/M/1028/1 Llyfr Cofnodion Cymdeithas Gyfeillgar,
1894-1910, 2/5/1895.
138. Y Genedl Gymreig, 19.8.85.
139. GAS DQ 2539, letter from Mills Roberts to W.W. Vivian,
12.11.1893.
140. Slate Trade Gazette, (1903) Vol. 9, pp. 111 and 213.

Chapter II

Attitudes and Behaviour

1. Character

The quarryman carried many identifying marks, some he bore with pride, some involuntarily. As we have seen the quarryman could be recognised by, amongst other things, diet, health and his relationship to his farming self, relative or neighbour. In other sections we shall confront other features of this identity: culture, work, trade unionism, politics. But it is important to realize the particularity of the quarryman's experience not only in his aspirations and achievements but in a more difficult sense also, in a certain style which reflected considerations of himself and his evaluation of others; it was an identity as multi-faceted as a fly's eye but which could also be reduced to simple expressions. Like the way children in quarrying areas emulated, with admiration and a sense of the inevitability of their own futures, the quirks and concerns of their elders. Looking back in 1936, Thomas Phillips remembered his childhood in the Llanberis district before the turn of the century when (1)

"the children of 'Refail newydd', used to copy the quarryman... the image idol of the quarryman was of the atmosphere... They had their little quarry, they copied their fathers in the craft, they owned their hammers and their gimlets; they went from time to time to the quarry." (2)

Or the way quarrymen from Penrhyndeudraeth, arriving home by train from their day's work in the mines of Blaenau,

"would, on emerging from the train at their home station, immediately begin to run or trot downhill towards the town, and about a quarter of a mile of roadway would be filled with running men, thinning out as groups would turn from the main group in order, still trotting, to

take the nearest side streets to their respective homes". (3)

These and many others were customs which marked out some men as quarrymen. Other customs distinguished their wives.

Little is known about the quarryman's wife and daughter and what follows is a very brief and impressionistic sketch, restrictions imposed by the scarce and impressionistic evidence immediately available. Slate quarrying was a male industry and as far as it is known no woman worked in a slate quarry in any capacity, certainly not after the early period of capitalisation and development in the industry. Moreover, since slate quarrying was the only major source of employment in the quarrying areas women who stayed at home found difficulty in gaining any employment at all. Thus of 2,289 women over 10 years of age in Bethesda in 1901, 1908 were not in employment: of the 381 who were at work, 141 were domestic servants, 117 tailloresses. (4)

The alternative to work was marriage, 78% of women at work in Bethesda were unmarried and of the remainder a number were widowed, (5) and since work was scarce marriage tended to be early. Several commentators on the slate communities note this tendency: "the general rule", according to Dr. Evan Roberts of

Penygroes, "is that they marry very young." (6)

The women of the quarrying villages, excluded from most forms of employment and confined to the house, developed a way of life which attracted considerable censure from observers. The Inspector of Mines was harsh in his criticisms of the quarryman's wife in 1875:

"The wives lack thrift, know nothing of cooking, and spend a large proportion of their husbands' earnings in the purchase of gaudy finery for which they are seldom free from debt. The men therefore fare badly... their homes are as comfortless as slovenliness can make them." (7)

Miss Winifred A. Ellis, a cooking instructress for the Merionethshire County Council was also critical of what she considered to be the extravagance and profligacy of women in the quarry towns, comparing their interest in gay finery very unfavourably with the more stolid tastes of the farmer's wife. She was also scathing about their cooking skills, complaining that they preferred to make "pancakes swimming in butter than a proper dinner" and that they would gossip all day and then open a tin when their husbands arrived home from work. (8)

It is difficult to estimate how accurately these generalized judgements applied to women in the quarrying towns for they surely involve the weighty prejudices of the observers; the image of the quarryman's wife always involved some element of these criticisms, however; the character of Leusa in T. Rowland Hughes' novel William Jones is a cruel caricature of the lazy and extravagant quarryman's wife. (9)

The criticisms become peculiarly clear in comparisons between the women of quarrying families and the women on the surrounding farms. On the land women played an important role in production and preparation (10) while in the terraces of the slate towns women's work was almost exclusively domestic; an interest in appearances, both of themselves, and of their houses, was natural. Obsession with cleanliness and the collection of 'best' furniture and ornaments carried to apparently self-defeating ends, came to be the hallmark of the "idle, frivolous, senseless girls." (11) There was the statutory piano and they had

"become mad on furniture. They must get a grandfather clock as large as Goliath's coffin and worth eight guineas; an eight guinea glass cupboard full of trinkets; an eight guinea dresser moaning under the weight of crockery, as well as of china dogs, cats, and soldiers and in between them all there is no room for the quarryman to turn." (12)

Tiny parlours filled to overflowing with gleaming possessions, places to look at, not to sit in, except perhaps over a tin of salmon when the rare relative visited, these were the creations and preserves of women denied employment.

Infertile for agriculture the soil of the quarrying areas sprouted voluntary organisations; cultural, sporting, political and religious. So many that one doctor complained that a cause of the quarryman's poor health was his rushing off every evening to attend some committee or other. Apart from the Friendly and Benefit Societies which flourished there was Trade Unionism, Liberal Organisations, innumerable chapels, choirs, bands, (13) football and billiard clubs.

The most extensive and demanding organisations were the chapels, dominating behaviour outside of the mere act of worship in the same way as their gaunt shapes overshadowed the terraced streets. They watched everything and shaped much and their influence was pervasive. The chapel's embrace was intense and not restricted to Sundays: the weekly timetable for one Bethesda chapel in 1900 ran as follows:

Sunday at	9 a.m.	Prayer meeting for the young.
	10 a.m.	Sermon.
	2 p.m.	Sunday School.
	5 p.m.	Singing meeting.
	6 p.m.	Sermon.
Monday	-	Prayer meeting.
Tuesday	-	Church (organisational meeting)
Wednesday	-	Five Study Meetings. Literary Society.
Thursday	-	Four Study Classes.
Friday	-	Band of Hope. (14)

When asked in February 1907 by one of the commissioners investigating the Church in Wales whether the chapel formed all the quarryman's interest the Rev. D.H. Williams, who had spent several years ministering to the Congregationalists of the quarrying town of Ebenezer, replied "Practically all his interest". "There is no theatre or concert room?" pursued the commissioner. "Absolutely nothing". "The chapel supplies all his wants?" "Yes, and if a concert is got up it is, as a rule, got up by one of the chapel choirs." (15) The chapels did not supply all the quarryman's wants by any means, but their presence was central to the life

and structure of slate quarrying communities: a complex network of allegiances and a powerful organisational framework non-conformity came to hold a position of quite particular importance.

This was true of much of Wales, of course, but in the quarry villages it was even more so. As the Rev. Ellis James Jones pointed out to the 1907 Commission there were, in the rural areas of Caernarfonshire, large numbers of farm servants and some farmers who adhered to, but were not actually members of, chapel congregations while "in the quarry districts you often find the case different, and the population generally are church members." (16)

The censorious eye of non-conformity deeply affected behaviour and observers were unanimous in their high regard for the respectability of the quarryman. "The Queen may be proud to rule over such a body of men" commented an English traveller in 1869.

"not your street corner loungers and pickpockets and burglars and blacklegs; but honest fellows with good furniture at home, mostly some small savings in the bank, the children at school and best suits for Sundays." (17)

A Welsh commentator estimated that the quarrymen were morally superior to the coal miners of South Wales though not to the lead miners of Cardiganshire (18) while a non-conformist minister asked in 1878

"What class of men, taking the great majority of them, will be found more respectful towards the word of God and the ministry of the gospel? what class more well disposed toward good works? and what class with so many total abstainers?" (19)

After visiting North Wales in 1874, Lord Chief Justice Cockburn was profuse in his congratulations to the inhabitants for "an absence of offences of the graver and more serious character." Commenting on his remarks a local paper noted that the workers did,

"not delight in cock-fighting, dog-fighting, pugilism, kicking, biting, and other such brutal pleasures. Even in the more refined pleasures of horse racing and betting they take no interest. But to literary competitive meetings and to concerts they go by the thousands. Their world may be very narrow but it is a quiet one." (20)

By the 1890s, however, football and billiards were both popular in the quarrying areas much to the fury of many of the more puritanical nonconformists (21) and by the end of the century there were well established football clubs (22) in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Nantlle Vale, Llanberis and Bethesda and the clubs in Porthmadog, Caernarfon and Bangor also owed a lot to the enthusiastic backing of quarrymen.

Crime was dominated by drunkenness; accurate statistics are difficult to come by but what there is available would tend to confirm the comments of observers as to the rarity of serious offences. In Caernarfonshire as a whole in 1887, the number of those proceeded against on drunkenness related charges [575] provided almost a third of the total [1,674]; the other major categories of offences were offences against the Elementary Education Acts [178], common assault [168], Highway Acts [93], simple larceny [92], poaching [90]. (23) In the quarrying areas themselves crime

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was largely confined to drunkenness charges. Of 96 people charged in Bethesda police station between 1884 and 1888 only 23 were quarrymen; of the twenty-three, fourteen were charged with drunkenness, being drunk and disorderly, drunk and incapable or drunkenness and assault; one was charged with assault and night poaching, one with assault, one with bastardy, one with deserting his wife, one with larceny and one with false pretences. (24) Hardly a record to arouse concern amongst the guardians of the ethic of respectability, except, perhaps, for the high percentage of drunkenness offences in a community that liked to define itself as abstemious.

Temperance and total abstinence were part of the ideology of the chapel but their control should not be over-estimated: public houses were stacked cheek to jowl along the length of the high streets of Bethesda and Blaenau and there is plenty of evidence that they enjoyed a buoyant trade.

A correspondent to the Herald Cymraeg in 1865 complained of drinking in Blaenau Ffestiniog where,

"Wherever I happened to go, they were laying in the ditches, along the side of the roads, in all directions."

In Llanllyfni, another quarrying village near Penygroes, he complained of singing in the public houses on a Sunday and of a fist-fight, watched by a large crowd, disturbing the sermon in a nearby Calvinistic Methodist Chapel. (25) The Rev. Robert Ellis, a champion of the moral quarryman, also complained in 1878 that, "drunkenness and unruly behaviour have recently increased greatly amidst this class of men." He estimated, however, that

the percentage of unruly drunkards in the population was "hardly six or seven per cent". (26)

It is difficult to understand how he arrived at such an estimate, whatever means were to hand for him will evade any present day assessor, but whatever a proportion of the total were the drinkers, they are not to be overlooked. They were certainly not overlooked at the time inviting both the censure and the blind eye of the chapels, which allowed the rear seats vacant for the "rebels" to slip in, "unnoticed", during the service. The young in particular were warned from joining those who

"paraded idly back and forth along the streets, lounging about by shop windows and public-houses, chattering and fooling about... spending their money... on expensive clothes and useless habits... drinking, smoking, chewing tobacco, playing billiards, bagatelle, cards, dominoes, and fighting of all sorts, from the thoughtless animal to the man." (27)

Here are hints of the "condition of the working class" in less puritan and less isolated parts of Britain, stalking the streets in a way foreign and frightening to the rural onlookers.

Whatever the percentage involved, and puritan paranoia would have exaggerated where local patriotism deflated, the nonconformist monolith had its underbelly, defined in drink, which it needed, as much to defend as to distance itself from. (28)

These then were some of the main features of the quarryman's communities; industrial dungeons in the hills they were also Welsh communities, in the following section the importance of the Welsh perspective will be discussed.

2. A Welsh Community and the problem of Welsh Nationality

The question of national consciousness in nineteenth century Wales is a perplexing complexity which very few people were willing to be coherent about. The contradictions abound - Lloyd George, fervently nationalistic in the 1880s and 90s becoming Prime Minister of Britain; Miners' Agent and socialist M.P. S.O. Davies being a firm supporter of a Welsh parliament in the 1950s; Plaid Cymru in the late 1960s notching impressive successes in the mining valleys of the South Wales coalfield. (29)

Threaded into the pattern is the astonishingly resilient Welsh language and the cultural apparatus of the Welsh speaking community and, in the 19th century, in particular, the overwhelming social and political power of Nonconformity. Politics was only one, albeit raucous, articulation of the consciousness of Welsh workers and the question of nationality is not necessarily synonymous with a coherent political nationalism.

Welsh workers during the 20th century have, of course, acquired an enviable reputation for internationalism - South Wales miners, for example, supplied the largest single contingent from Britain to fight for the Republican cause in Spain. This, and the predominance of intellectuals in the nationalist movement has meant that the actual attitudes of Welsh workers to their own nationality has very often been seen either as submerged in a militant class consciousness or viewed as no more than an extension to the concerns of the Welsh intelligensia.

We are here concerned with a particular group of Welsh workers and with discerning any coherent attitude toward their own Welshness and how that Welshness expressed itself. Nationality

was not carried as a banner by the quarrymen or any other workers in Wales, but it was part of their make up, worn, like their working clothes, unquestioningly, almost unconsciously. The roots of their consciousness lay in that social and cultural twist, that obscure condition which makes the history of Welsh society so apparently similar and yet so tantalisingly different from that of England.

Isolated by sea on two sides and by mountains on the other two the quarrymen were boxed into a far corner of Wales and their history is, of course, in many ways different from that of the mass of Welsh workers in the coalfields of North East and South Wales. The taciturn clannishness of North Walian and their extreme religiosity (allied to a reputation for a certain level of hypocrisy), owed a great deal to the culture of the slate quarries.

It would therefore be extremely rash to generalise too readily about the idea of nationality amongst Welsh workers on the basis of an acquaintance with the history of the quarrymen. The waves of immigrants which crashed onto the South Wales valleys bringing with them a different background and a different language did not affect the quieter course of the slate trade.

But, at least in the late nineteenth century, the differences between North and South were not so dramatic as to make comparison unprofitable. Wales still had a remarkably homogeneous political and religious culture and men like Mabon traded on very much the same idea of Welshness as did local leaders of labour in the slate quarries. And in the coalfield the Welsh language, though threatened and in decline, was nevertheless very widely spoken. In 1891, 49% of the population of Glamorgan was Welsh speaking

and in the coalfield itself, i.e. apart from the heavily anglicized coastal belt from Cardiff to Gower, the percentage of Welsh speakers was over 60%. As late as 1921, 45% of the people of the Rhondda Valley and 41% of Merthyr Tydfil were Welsh speaking. (30) And, of course, the tin plate industry of Swansea and Llanelli and the anthracite miners of Carmarthenshire and West Glamorgan were as Welsh in speech and culture as any part of Snowdonia.

The quarrymen thought of themselves as a special breed and were in turn often considered by others to be so. But many of the conditions under which they lived and worked were in fact common to other workers in Wales and their politics and their religion were identical to those of others.

The quarrymen were not separate, therefore, but they were perhaps the most Welsh of all workers in Wales; on a scale of anglicisation the slate quarryman would be next to the West Wales tinsplate workers at one end, coalminers would string along to meet steelworkers and dockers at the other. The idea of nationality amongst slate quarrymen, therefore, although confused and unclear might be expected to be a little more discernible than elsewhere and might offer us an explanation of what became a strand in the more cosmopolitan culture of others.

"Welsh" commented an observer of the quarrying township of Bethesda in 1911, "is the language of the home, the street, the quarry, the farm and the sanctuary." (31) In the parish of Ffestiniog, in 1891, of a total population of 28,000 ... 4,200 were bilingual, some 700 spoke only English and 21,500 were monoglot Welsh. A decade later, in the Bethesda Urban District in 1901, 1,500 males over the age of 3 could only speak the Welsh language,

700 had some command of both languages and only 12 men were monoglot English speakers. (32) The incidence of bilingualism amongst women was slightly higher, one of the many effects of the fact that domestic service, usually in well off English homes, was the only possible paid occupation for women. These census figures are not altogether reliable, officials suspected that there were many capable of speaking English who claimed that they could not out of a stubborn instinct to defend the position of the Welsh language. This may be a feature of present day censuses in Wales but there is little evidence to suggest that it was also a common 19th century ploy. More likely would be the opposite - that people with only a very basic grasp of the English vocabulary might flatter themselves by officially indicating bilingualism like the legendary figure who claimed to "speak both spokes".

The slate quarrying area therefore was a bastion of the Welsh language in which those who were able to speak English were a minority and those unable to speak Welsh were in a very small minority indeed. It is not therefore surprising that the quarrymen acquired a reputation for developing a high level of Welsh culture and several of Wales' leading poets and writers had their roots in the hard soil of these districts - R. Williams Parry, perhaps Wales' best modern poet, Kate Roberts, outstanding novelist and short story writer, to name only two. If not always a rich culture it was a lively one and it was pursued with a rare enthusiasm. Important and much looked forward to 'Eisteddfodau' were held regularly in the quarry towns and quarries and mines often held their own Eisteddfodau. The quarry itself was, in fact, an important

cultural centre where much music was made and innumerable verses were composed. There has been a certain mythologising about the cultural attainments of the quarrymen and a rather idealist picture has tended to be painted of scrubbed, starched, hard working men discussing Ruskin through their dinner time, writing poetry in the evenings and singing on Sundays with a heavenly voice. Not everyone achieved such perfection but it is true that the quarrymen generally had an obsession for tricky discussions, a talent for dry, anecdotal humour (as well as for buffoonery and practical jokes while at work) and a huge appetite for a diet of alliteration, rhymes and 'cyngannedd'.

Central to the quarryman's cultural pursuits was the caban, the lunchtime canteen which was also union office, debating chamber and the scene of a permanent test of literary skill. The caban had strict rules as to behaviour and often had a very formal structure of chairman, secretary, etc. A fascinating glimpse into the cultural concerns of the quarrymen is offered by the minute book of one such caban, the caban of Sink y Mynydd (33) a district of the Llechwedd slate mine in Blaenau Ffestiniog. The caban programme for October 1902, for example included, 'Owen Morris talking about his holidays, a mental arithmetic contest, a competition to sing the words of 'O Fryniau Caersalem' to the tune of Crug-y-bar, a lecture on the topic 'How much greater is a man than a sheep', discussion on the Education Act and the need to oppose it, a solo singing competition, a competition to read aloud a piece which had not been punctuated, a spelling contest, a contest to create Welsh words, a general knowledge

quiz, recitation of a precis of the poem 'Dafydd Brenin Israel' (this lasted a whole week), a quiz on Biblical knowledge, a competition to name places which all began with the same letter, a debate on whether ministers of religion should be appointed for life or for a certain term of office, a competition to interpret the meaning of a particular poem, a lecture on vanity.' In July, apart from debating "whether a wife is a choice or a necessity" the caban also held contests to write an 'englyn' to "The Jumper", to recite a poem after only having read it twice and to scan the poem 'Y Don'.

Such cultural pursuits carried out actually in the workplace itself produced a certain mental agility, a high level of literacy and ensured that the quarrymen were seeped in the genuinely popular aspects of Welsh culture.

The quarrymen were also avid readers of a host of small, local Welsh weekly newspapers. Two such papers Y Werin produced by radical Liberals and Y Chwarelwr Cymreig controlled by Lord Penrhyn's Tory interest were aimed exclusively at the quarryman while a host of other papers carried many columns on quarrying affairs and news from the quarrying areas. "The quarrymen", said a witness to the Royal Commission on the Church of England in Wales in 1907, "I should think, form the majority of the subscribers to the Geninen, Y Dysgedydd, Drysorfa, Y Genedl, Yr Herald Gymraeg, Gwalia, Y Goleuad, Y Werin, Yr Eco Cymraeg", (34) a fair number of papers to be read by such a small group of workers. The secular amongst these papers, moreover, though carrying a great deal of

local news, also took a much wider interest in politics and international affairs and usually sported a poets' corner and carried short stories, etc. The papers were also, of course, aflame with fiery anti-landlordism and other radical and often nationalistic comment.

The quarrymen were therefore very much influenced by the mainstream of Welsh culture and they made a contribution well beyond their numbers to that culture. They were also workers in what was virtually exclusively a Welsh industry. The slate producing area of Britain is confined to the western coast and extends with certain breaks from Argyllshire via Cumberland to Cornwall with outcrops also in Pembrokeshire, but during the 19th century with the development of large scale operations in North Wales this area came to completely overshadow the other slate producing districts and in 1882 North Wales was producing 93% of Britain's slate. (35) Not surprisingly the industry came to see itself purely as a Welsh industry. This heightened the quarryman's consciousness of being Welsh, there were few fellow slate quarrymen in England with which he could identify. When they came to found their union, therefore, it was never envisaged as being anything other than a Welsh organisation.

In 1865 there was a first abortive effort to set up "Cymdeithas Undebol Chwarelwyr Cymru" (United Society of Welsh Quarrymen) and when a successful organisation was launched in 1874 it was called the North Wales Quarrymen's Union. The union, which kept all its minutes in Welsh, never seems to have made any attempt to get in touch with slate quarrymen elsewhere in Britain. (36)

The quarry craft itself was Welsh; apart from the sales nomenclature of the slates themselves the vocabulary of the work, the technical glossary thrown up by the skill and the difficulties of working slate, was completely Welsh. (37)

This led many quarrymen to disqualify Englishmen altogether from ever being able to understand the tasks involved; "some would argue,"... explained Dewi Peris in his winning essay in the Bethesda Eisteddfod of 1875, "that there is in the Welsh, more than in any other nation, a particular suitability, an innate genius, to treat slate..." (38) Dewi himself disagreed with such a view but there were many who upheld it. "You cannot work a quarry in English" (39) declared a retired quarryman in 1942 echoing the opinion of the President of the N.W.Q.U. who argued in 1882 that "the English element does great harm to the success of the quarrymen". (40) Since almost all quarrymen were themselves Welsh these remarks were invariably aimed at the English managers of many quarries who were consistently condemned and attacked for their lack of understanding of the immense complexity of the quarrying craft. When English workmen were, once, introduced in 1875 into a Welsh slate quarry there was an uncharacteristically violent flare up. But it was in relations with managers that anti-English venom came to the surface. "We seem to live", wrote an anonymous Caernarfon pamphleteer in 1895, "to do the bidding of aliens. As landlordism imposes upon us Scotch agents and gamekeepers, so capitalism places over us English managers and gangers, "who outhiered Herod in their arrogance toward native workmen." (41)

And while some quarry companies had Welsh shareholders and others employed Welsh under-managers and agents (and there were a few Welsh proprietors of some small quarries) the ownership and management of the quarries was largely in English hands. It was the names of English families like Duff-Assheton Smith, Penrhyn, Holland, Greaves and Darbshire that dominated the industry. Resentment, rather than anger was the 19th century reaction to such a state of affairs, especially amongst the small, weak Welsh business class who felt that they had missed the biggest money-spinning opportunity that was ever liable to come their way, or anybody else's way, in the barren mountainous terrain of Snowdonia. (42) It was with a growing and keen frustration that they watched English adventurers make huge fortunes from the mountains; Lord Penrhyn, for example, made some £100,000 a year from his quarry for over half a century. John O. Griffith, not himself a quarryman but an early official of the N.W.Q.U. argued eloquently for a more aggressive Welsh intervention in the industry. "While we are dozing," he wrote in 1864, "hosts of foreigners are pouring in ... and they have already taken into their possession most, and I fear, the best of the slate beds. Dear fellow countrymen, we kept hold of our old mountains from the beginning and they have been our safe refuge in the days of our affliction and our tribulations; do we then have to give them up now in the day of our success and of our strength." (43)

In 1864 his plea was already too late. The hostility of the quarrymen toward managers and owners came therefore to have a strongly anti-English flavour directed at first at the boorish arrogance of quarry managements but growing in time to a general awareness that the mountains themselves and therefore the quarries

too were stolen property.

A Ffestiniog quarryman, savouring the freedom of speech that came with retirement, exclaimed in 1926 that,

"the blood boils in the veins with a just anger when one thinks of the brutality and the slavery that the worker had to suffer in his own country from the hand of a foreign company." (44)

It was not surprising therefore that industrial relations in the quarries were soured by the clash of nationalities. The quarrymen's openly displayed feeling that they understood slate quarrying far better than any English manager could ever hope to, their constant criticisms of managerial decisions led some managers to give up altogether and hand over effective control to the men, others were goaded to fury and to the paranoia of men surrounded by a work force whom they literally did not understand and who did not understand them; "the smallest thing" exclaimed the exasperated manager of the Penrhyn Quarry in 1900 "seems to irritate these Welshmen... these Welshmen are so ignorant and so childish that there is no arguing with them." (45)

Squabbles over the credentials of different interpreters were constant features of negotiations, neither side trusted the other's nominee and the men were always suspicious of any double meaning in the only too supple and slippery English language.

It was not only in the work situation that national feeling was apparent, it was there also in the other concerns of the community. The quarrymen were themselves deeply religious, spawning chapels and vestries at an astonishingly high rate. Within 3 miles of the

centre of Bethesda there were 29 places of worship, 22 of them Nonconformist. (46) Seated accommodation for worshippers in fact exceeded the total population of the town by over 1,500. (47)

The chapel was much more than a place of worship, it was also an organiser and an identity of the focus and the expression of the community's values. In the Nantlle Valley in 1906 for example, a wave of strike/s in the quarries of the valley were organised by the chapels rather than by the union lodge and a five month strike in Llechwedd in 1893 was sustained not so much by union support as by chapel collections throughout North Wales and the Welsh community in Liverpool. (48) Welsh Nonconformity also bore a heavily nationalistic face. Calvinistic Methodism, the largest denomination in the quarrying areas, was a purely Welsh growth which by the late 19th century was very conscious of this national identity. Other denominations, especially the Congregationalists, the second largest body, were also keenly conscious of their standing as Welsh institutions. Never was the particular nature of Welsh religion stressed so much perhaps as in the great religious revivals that swept the country periodically but always seemed to run out of enthusiasm at the English border.

The last great revival of 1904-5 bore the unmistakeable signs of a Welsh phenomenon. Nonconformity gave to Wales a self-confidence and security which also often engendered self-righteousness and a generally smug belief that Wales was the most faithfully religious corner in the whole world.

During the 1904-5 revival echoes of a belief in the special mission of the Welsh people could at times be heard, especially

in the uneven voice of the revivalist Evan Roberts: while Wales was not to conquer the world with power, or with armies, she was to achieve something far more important, "the young men of Wales", it was prophesised at one revivalist meeting "are to lead the way in the salvation of the world." (49) And there were many during the amazing winter of 1904-5 who did think that God had indeed chosen the Welsh people to be his especial agents.

The very names of so many quarrying villages, of Bethesda, Ebenezer, Nebo, Carmel bear testimony to this: the villages grew around their chapels. Bethesda, an English observer noted in the early 1900s, was "the headquarters.... of Caernarfonshire Nonconformity"; its chapels were massive and their hold intense. (50)

Making its ritualistic challenge to the nonconformist presence was the "alien church" of Anglicanism, cheeky with the strength of its wealthy English patrons. (Lord Penrhyn gave generously to the building and renovating of Anglican churches throughout North Wales.) This is not the place to describe the battle for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales but it was the major Welsh political issue of the late nineteenth century and nowhere was it fought so doggedly and consistently as in the quarrying areas. The church was reviled and scorned, its parsons characterised at best as lazy, ignorant and drunken, at worst as tyrants forcing their church and their dogmas on a hard pressed people. Its followers were a small minority in the slate quarrying districts, while some 4,000, for example, attended Nonconformist chapels on a Sunday evening in Bethesda in December 1872, the Anglican whips could get only some 500 into the church aisles. (51)

The quarrymen were enthusiasts for disestablishment, a question which itself reflected a national consciousness amongst Welsh religionists, and which formed one leg of the political tripod which sustained Liberalism in Wales, the other two being temperance and the land question.

For a group of industrial workers, the majority of them living in the terraced streets of the quarry villages, the quarrymen were enthusiastic land reformers, and land was another question which raised the issue of nationality and which was nourished as much by hostility toward an anglicized squirearchy as by any actual injustices in the land system.

The cry for land was a strident one; "We as workers", read a resolution adopted by the N.W.Q.U. in 1884,

"must come to own land, land is the raw material from which wealth is created, and without land our life and pleasure, our freedom and honour will be left to the tender mercies of others." (52)

The quarrymen themselves took more than a holiday interest in agriculture. Many of the sins of landlordism moreover, particularly the leasehold system, applied equally to the inhabitants of the villages as to the occupants of farm cottages. And in some areas the tenant farmer's landlord was also the quarrymen's employer, Lord Penrhyn and Mr. Duff-Assheton-Smith, for example, owned as well as their quarries, two of the biggest estates in Wales.

But the land question was more than a list of grievances, it

held an emotional charge, a bitterness which owed much to the feeling that the land of Wales was owned by an alien English aristocracy. Land, moreover, which it was universally believed had been common land not long earlier. As E. Morgan Humphreys, a North Walian member of the I.L.P. wrote in the Socialist Review in 1909,

"The question upon which the average Welshman will most readily adopt Socialistic views is that of the land, and that is, I have no hesitation in saying, because he knows that under the old Welsh law every individual had an interest in the land, and he regards the right as having been filched from him by English invaders." (53)

And for the quarrymen, as has been pointed out earlier, the return of the mountains to the people meant also the return of the quarries.

Temperance, the other powerful aspect of the quarryman's political credo, was not so directly linked to Welsh conditions though, with the passing of the 1881 Sunday closing Act, it did see an important legislative admission that Wales was a separate unit.

To this Liberal programme the nationalists of Cymru Fydd, the Young Wales movement of the 1880s and 1890s added the muddled but nevertheless powerful demand for Home Rule for Wales. The quarrymen were distinctly sympathetic to such ideas and the suggestion of a separate Parliament for Wales was warmly applauded by the 1886

Annual Conference of the N.W.Q.U. Not surprisingly Home Rule for Ireland was also a popular demand and the Irish campaigner Michael Davitt received an alarmingly friendly reception when he spoke to a notorious meeting of the quarrymen in Blaenau Ffestiniog in February 1886. (54) The newly formed North Wales Property Defence Association, presided over by Lord Penrhyn, viewed Davitt's visit with consternation and were terrified at the prospect of the importation of what were called "Irish methods" into Wales. Apart from setting up a land league and certain murmurings about boycotting, the only episode which started to fulfil these fears was the tithe war of 1886-1889. (55)

The demand amongst quarrymen for Welsh political representation came in its most dramatic form during a curious by-election held in Merionethshire in 1885 following the death of the sitting Liberal member.

Henry Robertson, the new Liberal candidate, a wealthy Scottish industrialist and landlord with extensive interests in North East Wales, had been nominated by the Liberal Party caucus some three years earlier, i.e. before the 1884 Reform Bill.

At that time only some 500 Ffestiniog quarrymen had been franchised, by 1885 there were over 2,000 of them. (56) The political debut of these quarrymen was an angry one as they objected strongly to the choice of Robertson as Liberal candidate and they demanded that he be dropped, but dropped, not in favour of a more radical candidate, but in favour of a Welsh one. At the first meeting held to discuss the issue, D.G. Williams, Chairman of the

Ffestiniog lodge of the N.W.Q.U. and Vice-Chairman of the union itself insisted that

"as a Welshman I wish to see Wales governed by
Welshmen." (57)

This, and the question of loyalty to the Liberal machine, was to be the keynote of the election. The quarrymen chose as their man an Anglesey barrister and small entrepreneur called Morgan Lloyd whose actual politics were hardly distinguishable from Robertson's. As the Cambrian News correctly commented

"Mr. Morgan Lloyd never has been an advanced Liberal,
and is not an advanced Liberal now... he is, in fact,
a small, vain person." (58)

A verdict with which it is difficult to disagree. Lloyd tried to put on a radical face on the land question but in reality his position was, while perhaps more eloquent, certainly no more advanced than Robertson's. Both men were landlords and if Robertson was a large one, Lloyd was a hard one. The election was fought almost exclusively on the Welsh question.

"It would be wrong of us as a nation to cast away
our own children and honour a stranger"
cried D.G. Williams at a meeting in Harlech. (59)

"The unionists (i.e. T.U.s) want a Welshman and if
they cannot have a Welsh Liberal they will have a
Welshman who is not a Liberal" commented the Cambrian News
sadly. (60)

Not only Welsh representation but also Welsh independence was a theme. "Welshmen", said Lloyd, "can manage their own affairs

without the intervention of the few Englishmen who live in Wales...

I am ready to fight the battle for Welsh independence." (61)

Later he called for a Welsh party in Parliament on the Irish model and demanded that "Every member for Wales ought to be able to speak the Welsh language." (62)

In response Robertson endeavoured to play up his own Scottish background which made him "familiar with the wants and aspirations of the Celtic Races" (63) but it is doubtful what effect this had on electors who had suffered as much, if not more, at the hands of Scottish agents as of English landlords.

In 1885 therefore the Merionethshire quarrymen showed their willingness to go it alone in the battle for a nationalist political identity and to break with the Liberal machine. In this they were supported loudly by the young and radical Lloyd George. To the other past and future leaders of the national movement, however, this strategy was anathema. Michael D. Jones, the lion of the nationalist movement for decades past, declared himself for Robertson whom he was sure would "work for Wales." Tom Ellis, despite his own nationalist position, did likewise. (64) Robertson won the election with 3,700 votes and Wynne with just over 2,000 came second. Lloyd won just under 2,000. It was generally agreed that virtually all Lloyd's votes came from one group, the quarrymen of Ffestiniog and the surrounding districts.

His election committee, composed almost entirely of quarrymen, debated for some time whether to go it along or to rejoin the Liberals. There were plans to form a Political Union of the Welsh Nation, but they never materialised. (65) With a more reliable candidate than Lloyd something might have come of it, but with a permanent

rural majority in the county under the control of the Liberal machine the quarrymen had not much choice but to return to the fold. But first they thanked Lloyd "for his efforts on behalf of the workers". (66)

As the Cambrian News had feared early in the campaign the election fostered a spirit of opposition between the industrial and agricultural classes of Merionethshire for the quarrymen had pushed their nationalism much further than the rural voters were willing to go.

And yet even in this incident the situation was far from being clear cut, nationalism here was being used by the quarrymen's leaders more as a weapon against the old Liberal Party caucus than as a cause in itself. The vocabulary of the election was that of nationalism and yet its meaning surely pointed to an isolated group of workers resentful and suspicious of the Whiggish pretensions of their leaders and striking out for a new kind of Liberalism. (67)

It was not long, in fact, before a more predictable political vocabulary was being used and labourism rather than nationalism came to be the quarrymen's quarrel with the Liberal machine.

Quarrymen came increasingly to talk not of Welsh representation but of working class representation. By the early '90s such talk was widespread. "Why must we be oppressed by those who already profit from us?" asked a Dinorwic quarryman in 1892; he went on to call for a united front of quarrymen to demand Parliamentary representatives "who understand our needs and feel for us and are ready to do all they can to exalt us as a working class". (68)

The previous year there had been moves to get workers onto Boards of Guardians in Caernarfon - "The members of the board", ran a complaint, "own their mansions, their homes, their oxen and their wines. They are surrounded by luxury. What do they know about living on 12/- a week with a family of 9 or 10". (69) And in the County Council elections of 1892 a few candidates were put up in Blaenau Ffestiniog under a Labour label and others stood earlier as test candidates (including Morgan Lloyd's most doughty champion D.G. Williams) though all were defeated. (70)

These were only very tentative first steps toward no more than a Lib-Labism, and yet they were definite signs that the political articulation of class consciousness was astir among the quarrymen.

The Penrhyn lock-out, 1900-03, brought an increasing awareness of class identification to the quarrymen but it would be wrong to see the latter quarter of the nineteenth century as a period when the quarrymen were asked to choose between class and country and were able to make a decisive choice for the former. There were, after all, eloquent voices which had raised a possibility of a fusion of class and nationalist aims.

Lloyd George had set up in 1888 his Udgorn Rhyddid, (Trumpet of Freedom) which, in his own words, was intended to be a "thoroughly nationalist and socialist paper". (71) While it is doubtful whether Lloyd George himself ever understood what either term meant, there were others that did. R.J. Derfel, a prominent Welsh poet and member of the S.D.F. and later of the Fabian Society argued concretely in the 1880s for a socialist and independent Wales. (72) W.J. Parry, for many years General Secretary and President of the N.W.Q.U.

flirted in the 1890s with a plan to set up a new political organisation with nationalist and labourite aims. And as we have seen, the quarrymen of Ffestiniog toyed in 1885 with the idea of setting up a Political Union of the Welsh Nation. And finally as late as 1918, R.T. Jones, General Secretary of the N.W.Q.U., stood for parliament on a "labour and nationalist platform".

A national outlook did not evaporate therefore with a growing class consciousness, on the contrary they for a while seemed as if they were to co-exist. Even at the height of the Penrhyn lock-out W.W. Jones, the President of the N.W.Q.U., was able to claim the struggle as "the battle for nationalism", (73), as the clash of the values, and the people, of Wales with English tyranny. And yet, in real political terms, these attempts to fuse a nationalist programme to the quarrymen's consciousness were each one no more than a gesture.

And herein lies the problem of Welsh nationality, the problem of why a nationalist movement with working class support did not emerge in Wales in the late nineteenth century. In part it was the weakness of will and muddled policies of the middle class, Home Rulers of Cymru Fydd which ensured that no such movement would be built. For despite all their rhetoric (and they could be extremely nationalistic at times - Tom Ellis, for example, once remarked that three things improved with hanging, kippers, wet clothes and Englishmen) they demonstrated quite clearly that, unlike some of the quarrymen, they were unwilling to, and incapable of, breaking with the Liberal Party.

But perhaps even more than this failure of leadership, it was something in the nature of the Welsh working class community itself and in the way it viewed its Welshness, which prevented such a movement from emerging.

For, as I hope I have shown, the quarrymen were steeped in Welshness and in a consciousness of their nationality - at work, in prayer, in pleasure and in politics, this consciousness informed their activities and their beliefs. The national consciousness never became a nationalist movement, however, because the politics of that nationality were aimed essentially at preserving control of the Welsh community itself and rarely, if ever, at challenging the English power system outside. For while, as we have seen, the land agitation did aim to limit the power of landlordism and of quarry owners in Wales, what was really striking about this and other agitations was its readiness to admit the legitimacy of English power and ownership. For the Welsh middle-class, of course, who sought to replace that power, things were different, but for the quarrymen it was not so much the English power system which drove them to fury, but rather, any attempts by that system to interfere in the values of their own communities. That is why disestablishment was such a burning issue; for Anglicanism was a thorn in the side of the community, interfering with such vital questions as education and burial places. The crucial borderline for the slate quarrying community ran through the quarry. Here the integrity of the community faced its gravest risk, and here a curious pattern emerged in the great

strikes of 1874, 1885, 1896-7 and 1900-03; for these battles were essentially about the control of work, the right of the masters to own was rarely challenged, but their right to manage, to interfere in an essential part of the community's identity certainly was. The quarrymen manned the defences of their community but only for its right to live within the greater and different society outside. It was here that nationality was so powerful, for all struggles were interpreted as offering a choice of one community or another, it was the consciousness of belonging which often made struggle so bitter. For those who rejected a part of the community's identity and thus threatened the whole, either be it by their Anglicanism or their blacklegging, were forced out of their right to a nationality. Referring to blacklegs in one of the quarry disputes the quarrymen were recommended not only to scorn and to revile them but also

"not to allow one of them, or any of their sons,

to marry a Welsh woman. Let their descendants be

forever foreigners to our land and to our language." (74)

A fully developed nationalism could not develop within such a limited, closed and essentially defensive idea of nationality and it may well be that the Welsh nationalism of the twentieth century draws its strength not from the confidence in and richness of the Welshness of the quarrymen's community of the past but rather from the weakness which has followed the fatal breach in those defences which the quarrymen manned so patiently.

1. Character

1. Thomas Phillips, Bro Deiniol. (1936) p. 37.
2. " delw " translates as both ' image ' and ' idol '
3. Moses Kellow " Autobiography of Moses Kellow ",
 Quarry Managers' Journal, January 1944. p. 300.
4. Census Returns, Bethesda V.D., 1901.
5. ibid.
6. Report... Quarry Committee of Inquiry, evidence
 of Dr. E. Roberts, 243.. His opinion was
 echoed by Dr. Mills Robens of Dinorwic who
 complained that men married before they were
 twenty and the women even younger. And in
 Blaenau Ffestiniog a local newspaper condemned
 the practice of " inexperienced children "
 getting married resulting in " children bringing
 up children " in the town.
 University College of North Wales, Bangor.
 Coetmor Mss. 44. n.d.
7. Report of Inspector of Mines, 1875.
8. Report... Merionethshire Mines, evidence of
 Miss. W.A. Ellis, 4752 - 4777.
9. T. Rowland Hughes, William Jones, (1944)
10. For an account of women's work on the land in
 late nineteenth century Wales see David Jenkins,
 The Agricultural Community in South West Wales.
11. Coetmor Mss., 44, " Sefyllfa Naturiol a Moesol
 Isel y Chwarelwyr fel Dosbarth ", (Y Faner n.d.)
12. Coetmor Mss 44. p.9.
13. Particularly well known were the Royal Oakeley
 Silver Band, the Royal Vaynol Brass Band, (Band
 Llanrug), and, most famous of all, the Nantlle

- Vale Silver Band; there were also bands in Moeltryfan, Waunfawr, Llanberis and Deiniolen.
14. Adroddiad Eglwys a Chymulleidfa, Jerusalem M.C. Bethesda, 1900.
 15. Royal Commission on the Church of England and other religious bodies in Wales and Monmouthshire. 1910, evidence of Rev. D. H. Williams, 6815 - 7355.
 16. ibid., evidence of Rev. E. J. Jones, 3565 - 35863.
 17. K. K., Wales and its people, (1869) p. 47.
 18. Ceredig, Y Dosbarth Gweithiol yng Nghymru (1866), pp. 68 - 72.
 19. R. Ellis, " Adgofion am Ddiwygiad Beddgelert " (1878) in J. O. Jones, Cofiant a Gweithiau y Parch Robert Ellis. (1883)
 20. Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald, 9. 8.. 1874.
 21. See, for example, letters to Yr Herald Cymraeg 14. 7.. 1896; 28. 7. 1896; the letter discussing the relative immorality of dominoes and football.
 22. DQ 2594, Llanberis Football Club, Balance Sheet, 1902, 1903.
 23. " Total number of Persons proceeded against before J.P.s in each Police District, year ended 29. 9. 1887 ", Police Reports, England and Wales, p. 31. (45)
 24. GAS. Police papers.. Be thesda Charges Book 1885 - 1948.
 25. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 27. 5.. 1865.
 - 26.. R. Ellis., op.. cit.
 27. Un o Honoch, Y Faner, 2. 9. ? (Coetmor Mss 44.)

28. Drink was the main challenge to respectability but there were also dark suggestions of prostitution; three prostitutes were charged Caernarfon in 1887, one in Merioneth, and a correspondent to Llais y Wlad, 18. 9. 1874. accused a Bethesda house of being a brothel.

Welsh Nationality.

29. For a general historical introduction to the discussion on Welsh nationalism see K.O. Morgan, "Welsh Politics: Cymru Fydd to Crowther", Anatomy of Wales 1972; idem, "Welsh Nationalism: the Historical Background", Journal of Contemporary History, Vol 6, No.1. (1971): Sir Reginald Coupland Welsh and Scottish Nationalism (1954) ; William George, Cymru Fydd (1945), and the chapters by D. Gwenallt Jones and Gwynfor Evans, Seiliau Hanesyddol Cenedlaetholdeb Cymru (1950)
30. J. Parry Lewis, "The Anglicisation of Glamorgan", Morgannwg v., iv., 1960., pp. 28 - 49.
31. D. J. Williams. M.A., The Borough Guide to Bethesda. (1911)
32. Census Returns, 1891, 1901.
33. U.C.N.W. 5440, Llyfr Cofnodion hen Giniawdy Sink y Mynydd, Llechwedd. 14. 6. 1902 - 15. 4. 1904.
34. Royal Commission on the Church of England in Wales. he meant the majority locally, evidence of Rev. D.H.Williams, 7336 - 7346.

35. D. Dylan Pritchard, "The Expansionist Phase in the History of the Welsh Slate Industry", Quarry Managers' Journal, p. 78.
36. This is in sharp contrast to the organisation of North Wales' other major group of quarrymen, the granite workers; they were not ignored by the Settmakers Union, an organisation based as securely in the Aberdeen area of Scotland as the N.W.Q.U. was in North Wales. There were, in 1903, 13 branches of the Settmakers Union in North West Wales with a membership of 1025 (out of a total of 3274) see Settmakers and Stoneworkers' Journal, January 1903.
37. see Emyr Jones, " Termau'r Chwarel a'u Hystyrau ", Canrif y Chwarelwr, (1963), pp 123 - 162.
38. Dewi Peris, " Chwarelyddiaeth ", Y Geninen x 111, 1895., pp. 273 - 4.
39. John Williams, " Atgofion Chwarelwr ", Y Llenor, (1942), pp. 134 - 5.
40. Y Genedl Gymreig, 24. 5. 1882.
41. Celt, Cymru Fydd Gymru Rydd, (1895), p. 5.
42. see, for example, Morgan Richards, Slate Quarrying and How to make it Profitable, (1876), pp. 86 - 99.
43. J. O. Griffith, Traethawd Ymarferol ar Lechfeini Sir Gaernarfon, (1864), p.7.
44. Hugh Lloyd, Hunangofiant Rybelwr (1926), p. 17.
45. GAS Penrhyn Quarry Letter Book, 28. 11. 1900, 11. 12. 1900.

46. Baner ac Amserau Cymru, 11. 12. 1872.
47. Royal Commission on Church of England in Wales,
evidence of Rev. E. J. Jones. 35365.
48. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 3. 7. 1906.
49. Awstin, The Religious Revival in Wales 1904,
p. 26.
50. A. G. Bradley, Highways and Byways in North
Wales, (1919) p. 257.
51. Baner ac Amserau Cymru, 11. 12. 1872.
52. Coetmor 46., p. 5..
53. E. Morgan Humphreys, " Socialism and Welsh
Nationality ", The Socialist Review,
(October 1909).., p. 118.
54. Frank Owen, Tempestuous Journey, (1954) p. 46.
55. A correspondent to a local Welsh paper wrote
in horror of the men who " wish to Irishise
' The old land of the hills '... do you wish
to see ? " he asked, " the land of song
turned into a hellish bonfire by the admirers
of O'Donovan Rossa ".. Coetmor 46. p. 15.
56. Cambrian News, 21. 8. 1885; see also
The Times, 10. 12. 1885.
57. ibid.
58. ibid., 11. 9. 1885..
59. ibid.
60. ibid., 28. 8. 1885.
61. ibid., 11. 9. 1885.
62. ibid., 25. 9. 1885.
63. ibid., 20. 11. 1885..
64. ibid., 11. 9. 1885.. This, it has since been
argued, was not the last time Ellis was to
put party before principle.

65. Y Genedl Gymreig., 9. 12. 1885.
66. ibid., 16. 12. 1885.
67. A correspondent to the Cambrian News explained why the quarrymen were exasperated: " Confound your political machinery... we voted for a Welsh Radical by a vast majority, and we have nominated an English Whig by our delegates... a man we have never seen and know nothing of, to act for us in the most momentous circumstances of life ". (Cambrian News, 11. 9. 188
68. Y Genedl Gymreig, 9. 12. 1891.
69. ibid., 21. 10. 1891.
70. ibid., 24. 2. 1892, 9. 3. 1892.
71. Frank Owen. op. cit., p. 51.
72. D. Gwenallt Jones, Detholiad o Ryddiaith Gymraeg R. J. Derfel, Vol 1, pp. 9 - 60.
73. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 18. 2. 1902.
74. Coetmor. 45.

Chapter III WORK AND CONTROL.

Until the end of the 19th century the world's largest slate quarry was the Penrhyn Quarry near Bethesda; hacked into galleries, gigantic steps in the mountainside, it was a mile long, three quarters of a mile wide and half a mile deep. It employed some 2,800 men who with gunpowder and crowbar, hammer and chisel and skill blasted and coaxed the slate from the mountain. Its galleries varied in height from 36 to 66 feet, (with an average of 54 feet), in breadth they varied from wide platforms of 45 feet to narrow ledges no wider than 6 feet. (1)

When levering blocks from the face men would hang over the precipitous and shattered sides with a hemp rope looped around them. Every hour a bell rang out to signal them to shelter, one minute later on the signal of another bell fuses would be lit all over the quarry; after the roar of rock shattering in the explosions four minutes later another bell would ring summoning them back to work. The slabs loosened by the blast had to be split and pushed in trucks running along the rails to the head of the gallery where they were lowered down an incline to the great sheds below. There they were sawed and split into slates and then taken down Penrhyn's own railway to Port Penrhyn whence they went to roof the industrial centres of England and Germany.

Working hours were determined largely by the weather and the seasons, the working day lengthening with the coming of summer. (2)

All worked the same hours but wages depended on which category of work was executed. The quarrymen proper making up just over 50% of the work force organised themselves into crews consisting normally of three or four men, each crew coming to a separate working agreement with the management.

The other main occupational groups in the quarries were Bad-Rockmen and Rubbish men. The Bad-Rockmen worked usually ⁱⁿ crews of three, taking a bargain which, unlike that of the quarrymen proper, would be of bad-rock, that is ^{of} rock from which no slates could be worked. The agreement worked out with the management would give them so much per ton for removing the bad rock.

The Rubbish-men were divided into two groups, those who cleared the rubbish (waste rock) from the galleries where the quarrymen's bargains lay and those who were responsible for building the giant tips of waste rock which were built around the quarry. They were paid by the ton or by the yard of materials removed.

Also at work in the quarry were the "rybelwrs", boys who were in the first stage of learning the craft; their job was to wander along the galleries offering assistance whenever there was need for an extra hand. Sometimes they would be given an extra slab of rock to split for which they would be paid by the crew. From this stage the rybelwr could hope to become a journeyman and then a quarryman proper, though many men found themselves stuck in this stage.

The quarry also employed a number of time-workers such as weighers, hauliers, brakesmen, stationary enginemen, locomotive engine drivers, engineers, blacksmiths, saw sharpeners, carpenters, platelayers, storekeepers,

timekeepers and general labourers, but their total number was small. (3)

The quarrymen proper were the elite group of the quarry for though they did not earn considerably more than the bad-rockmen their status was always treated with some awe.

For though there was no apprenticeship in slate quarrying, and a man became a quarryman proper through his skill and his connections in a fairly informal way; a quarryman was conscious of his superior skill and status and relations with other workers were sometimes strained, exacerbated by the fact that the quarrymen usually lived together in the quarry village while lower grades often came from outside the immediate area. The North Wales Quarrymen's Union, however, was an industrial union and was open to all those employed in slate quarries and wage claims, while respecting differentials, were almost always made on behalf of all the workers. In Penrhyn in 1874, in fact, the men went so far as to put in a claim, along with their own, on behalf of the journeymen who they themselves, and not the quarry owner, employed. This fairly amicable relationship between quarry workers was reflected in the fairly small difference in wages between the higher grades. Only the labourers, very often men from the surrounding agricultural areas were left out of the consensus; their lives were not staked in the quarries and they knew of other ways to live.

Industrial relations were not unnaturally therefore dominated by the claims and the concerns of the quarrymen proper and their main preoccupation was the wages system under which they worked, the bargain system, the effects of which were profound. For the bargain

system was central to the method of working and to the consciousness of the quarryman.

It was a system which in its different forms was known in other extractive industries, and in the slate industry in other countries, (4) though perhaps in no other did it survive on such a scale into the 20th century. The problem which the system was supposed to deal with was the one posed by the tremendous unevenness in the nature of the rock worked, from one part of a quarry to another. Thus one man's stretch of rock might be buckled or the slate imperfect while another's would be finely grained and easily worked; as it was quarried, moreover, the nature of the rock was constantly changing. Any wages system which merely remunerated men for the number of slates produced was therefore clearly inoperable. The bargaining system meant that each crew of four or five quarrymen would negotiate a monthly contract with the management, the terms of which contract depended on the assessed ease or difficulty of extracting slates from the face in question; depending on the bargain settled monthly the men were paid a sum of "poundage" per pounds worth of slates produced. Men working on inhospitable rock would be paid a high poundage, compensating for the low yield or poor quality of the slates produced, those quarrying good rock received a low poundage.

Theoretically, therefore, the bargaining system recognised each quarryman or at least each crew of quarrymen, as independent contractors who could argue about the terms of the contract before coming to an agreement. The traditional independence of the quarrymen

was thus formalised into a wages system. In practice it need not, and usually did not, work, but it maintained and indeed encouraged the feeling among the quarrymen that they were equals in some sense with the quarry owners. In practice, of course, the bargain was rarely equal; it could not be. The men usually had to accept the terms offered by the setting steward, for if they refused they were simply out of a job. The haggling on setting days, however, continued and formal compromises were still come to, and occasionally a crew could convince a steward that his assessment of the rock was mistaken. In good times, indeed, in the smaller quarries the system could become a genuinely bargaining one again with the crews holding out for a higher poundage and the management, eager to meet the demands of the market, yielding readily. But in the larger enterprises any element of free bargaining had long since passed. What remained, a wages system which reminded the men constantly of their equal and independent position but at the same time treated them like wage slaves, was a persistent source of friction. In the Penrhyn strike of August 1865,

" the common complaint was that the manager always determined the price, and that therefore the men had no choice but to either accept his offer or turn their backs on the works and go to seek work elsewhere, this is considered by them to be the greatest oppression." (5)

And in Dinorwic the situation had degenerated so much by 1885 that the men were not even allowed to state their case during the bargain setting, but merely to accept the steward's ruling; they appealed in that year that

a bargain baker " should be allowed to advance his reasons when he considered the offered terms of the manager unreasonable and insufficient." (6)

This break down of the ideal bargaining system, was a crucial factor, in collective action; though it has been argued that this kind of wages system encourages an individualistic, anti-Union sentiment in the work force.(7). Such attitudes, as we shall see later, were certainly prevalent among a large section of slate quarrymen, but an inoperative bargaining system was also a powerful force in the creation of a collective consciousness. For as a wages system which had lost its genuine bargaining element it invited a collective response while at the same time stressing and encouraging not necessarily an individualistic, but certainly an independent, spirit among men: a combination which could produce a willingness to indulge in collective struggle. (8)

As a reporter from the Pall Mall Gazette noted , in 1885,

" there exists in the system upon which the quarry is worked a permanent source of difference, i.e. the bargaining system." (9)

In some of the more inefficiently managed quarries the system could be manipulated by the men to their own advantage; they could deliberately hold back output, pleading hidden complications in the rock, thus pushing the poundage up. They could then either enjoy good wages for less work, or, after winning a high poundage at the beginning of the month the rock could miraculously improve, the slates would come off ("fel menyn" , (Like butter) and the month's wages could be considerably higher than the setting steward had anticipated. An

inexperienced agent could therefore be " in their hands and they know how to handle him". (10) The opportunity for this kind of anti-managerial action which the bargaining system afforded, coupled with its essential imprecision (bargain setting time was known as " The Guess " by the Penrhyn quarrymen) meant that the setting stewards were hostile and suspicious and that most quarrymen at one time or another suffered from a sense of grievance. Every month the system invited distrust and hostility and the result was continuous friction between men and management.

The system was jealously guarded by the quarrymen. In 1876 the defence of the bargain system lead to a riot at the Hafod y Wern quarry in Betws Garmon; when the management tried to introduce a payment by the hour scheme the men walked out, were sacked and then replaced by Cornish blacklegs. This roused the quarrymen of a wide area into fury and a large body of between 500 and 1,000 men marched to Hafod - Wern, many of them, it seems, from the Nantlle quarries some miles away; the men marched into the quarry, scattering the Cornishmen and assaulting the agent and engineer, the latter having been " knocked down with a stone and brutally kicked, was, it is stated, dragged some distance on a wagon, and pitched out upon a heap of iron pipes." (11) The men remained in control of the quarry for an hour leaving before the police could arrive from Caernarfon.

Quarrymen were not often moved to take such action and the incident shows how much they treasured the bargain system and how determined they were to protect it, not just in their own quarry but wherever slate was worked.

The Union had nothing officially to do with the

incident, following which 16 men were fined £5 each, (12) only one of whom was a Union member, and it roundly condemned the behaviour of the men. In the defence of the bargain system, however, the union too was determined and in December 1877 the Union council for the first and only time during the 19th century itself called a strike. The scene was the small quarry of Rhos in Capel Curig where the management tried to introduce new regulations which the Union felt to be "destructive of the principle of contract which has worked so well in slate quarries"; (13) the strike involved very few men but lasted for two and a half years and cost the young Union £1,100 to sustain. Such was the readiness of slate quarrymen to prevent any breach in the bargain system.

The real threat to the bargain system was not, however, to come, in the 19th century, from payments by the hour schemes but from another variant of 'contract' work. In May 1879 the Penrhyn quarry committee decided for the first time to look at an issue which was to preoccupy them for twenty years, to "investigate the case of those who had taken 'contracts'". (14) Though a bargain was, in a sense, a contract, and that term was frequently used to describe it, the form of contract which had now come to the committee's notice was quite different and posed a real threat to the bargain system. The new contract system was one under which parts of the quarry were sub-contracted to men who then themselves employed a gang to do the work; under such a system a quarryman was not himself a contractor but was merely the employee of one; it is not clear how he was to be paid by the contractor, presumably by a piece work system, but, however the wages were paid, a part of what would

have previously been the quarrymen's now went into the middleman's pocket. But far more important than this financial consideration was the assault on the independence of the quarryman implicit in the contract system, for under contract a man worked not for himself in his own style but for a wage and under the direct instruction of a contractor.

By March 1881 there were 26 contracts in the Penrhyn quarry and the main victims were boys. The choice of boys as the labour force for this system was itself an interesting one, suggesting as it does that quarrymen of any experience were loth to lose their former status but also, perhaps, pointing to a management strategy of trying to breed a new generation of workmen unused to the freedoms of the bargain system and trained to accept the indignities of contract work. The boys working under contract in November 1884 complained bitterly that they were " not allowed the same amount as boys in general ", and felt that " they are bound to carry out that which is ordered that they do by their masters whether or not it is right or wrong ". (15)

The contract system was consistently opposed and the threat of its further extension was a central underlying cause of the 1896 - 7 lock-out in Penrhyn. for it was " believed to be the cause of great injustice to a large number of quarrymen ", (16)

In 1900, in fact, hatred of the contractors once (17) again led quarrymen to violence and it was the beating up of two contractors which led directly to the 1900 - 03 lock-out. (18)

The bargaining system was defended not merely for the good wages it could bring with effective organisation, though that was not to be overlooked, but also, and more important, because of the style of working for which it allowed; for the very organisation of their work gave to quarrymen a considerable degree of independence and control over their labour. Once a bargain had been settled the crew could work it as it saw best. As Robert Parry, one of the leaders of the Penrhyn men in 1874 explained:

" contracts should be let according to the nature of the work, and after that is done no further meddling with the industry of the contractors should be tolerated in any way ". (19)

And twenty years later a Ffestiniog rockman was adamant that,

" When they let me a bargain I do not want them to interfere with me in my work until I have finished my contract ". (20)

So strong was this feeling that it was generally considered that a bargain, the actual place in the quarry not the settlement, was in a sense the property of those who worked it, not just for the month of any agreement's life, but for good. Morgan Richards advised managers that,

" the customary or prescriptive right of a crew to their bargain is so sacred and well established that no wise manager wishing to be at peace with his men, will venture to interfere with it." (21)

Disputes over the manning and location of bargains were therefore not uncommon; managers attempting to arrange the working of the quarry as they saw fit and quarrymen protecting their rights in the bargain. For such a system was not one that suited the employers and a degree of mobility, moving crews from bargain to bargain depending on their abilities and the demands of the rock, would have been to their advantage. Joseph Kellow, Quarry Engineer, " twenty six years of practical experience", complained bitterly in 1868 of this practice of one crew staying permanently on the one bargain; the best bargains, he argued, should be given to the best crews and the poorer crews should be moved if their bargain improved but,

" unfortunately it is the rule for each party to retake the same bargain (regardless of their general fitness) at the monthly letting, however much it may militate against the employer." (22)

Such a system did not encourage close supervision. Each crew worked its bargain in its own way, advice was not sought and interference coldly received. This tradition also militated against adequate safety supervision as

well as work discipline for though the Union was in the 1890s calling for government inspection there still existed a residue of resentment against any such interference amongst many of the men. A bargain, in all its aspects was the responsibility of the crew concerned and it was up to them to ensure that it was safe.

Supervision was also discouraged by the fact that as the men were working a kind of piece work it was in their interest as well as that of the employers' to work as hard as possible. Indeed there were complaints that it drove some men to work too hard. On the other hand it also meant that the pace of work was to some extent determined by the men themselves and in the boom of the 1870s it was apparently a

" great and constant complaint... that quarrymen do not work as they ought to do the first and second week in every month." (23)

The work itself was therefore largely out of management's control though the situation varied considerably from quarry to quarry, some claiming to inspect each bargain daily others not really inspecting them at all.

Supervision was not made any easier by the huge scale of some of the workings and by the remoteness of others.

William Jones. M.P. claimed in the House of Commons that the Penrhyn Quarry was " four miles long, three wide and nearly a mile deep " (24) which is an exaggeration but it must have seemed that big. Even in the more efficient quarries supervision was not at all tight compared to factory production; in 1886 there were 19 foremen and 40 slate inspectors in the open quarries keeping an eye on the work of over 6,000 men.(25) In the smaller and more remote mines supervision and

management of any kind seems, in the 60s and 70s to have been virtually absent. When H.Mm. Inspector of Mines came to investigate conditions in the Merionethshire slate mines for the first time in 1875 he encountered considerable difficulty as he could rarely find, on his visits to the mines, managers or agents in charge of them. It was in some consternation that he complained in his report about this startling absence of management for,

" it is manifest that an idea prevails that a mine is able to manage itself." (26)

In a great many mines this indeed seems to have been the case; a correspondent to the Mining Journal is in 1865 listed twentytwo Welsh slate quarries and mines, some of them quite substantial, which showed a profit and

" are all worked under the command of a quarryman with a clerk, without even a secretary, no engineers, no directors, not even an office." (27)

The nature of employment at the quarries sustained this independence of the men. Not only, as we have seen, were the bargain takers in a sense sub-contractors themselves employing journeymen, but the rybelwrs were also relatively free of managerial control (though not of managerial vindictiveness) wandering as they did around the quarry in search of someone to assist, a kindly soul to help them out, or an unfulfilled debt. These men, and the journeymen, worked in reality for the quarrymen themselves rather than for the quarry owners, though they were also attached to and policed by the quarry officials whom they sold their slates to. It was a system, as one can imagine, which could rapidly get

out of the control of the management, especially a management not familiar with the men, their language or their ways.

Not only the actual work of slate quarrying but also the hours and days worked were also only tenuously controlled by the management and until the 1880s the men seemed to have established a relatively free and easy system of working hours, treating them more as guide lines than as imperatives. This is not to say that working hours were ever short but attempts to regularise them, especially to extend them into the hours of darkness before dawn and after dusk do not seem to have been particularly successful. Thus even in the mines, where underground work made considerations of day-light irrelevant, the managers encountered considerable difficulty and resentment in their attempts to enforce a pre-dawn start to the working day in Winter; thus a rock man explained in 1893 how he might ignore the whistle and "follow the day". (28) Draconian disciplinary measures intended to regularise hours of working were an essential part of the employer's offensive in the 1880s and 90s.

Equally disturbing for them were the disruptive effects of quarrymen taking unofficial days off. In 1878 this had become such a problem in Penrhyn that a new code of discipline, causing much opposition, had to be introduced. The manager intended a system of fines for late-comers to work and to have, as the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald explained,

"Some arrangement by which what are called 'extraordinary holidays' shall not exceed a certain number of days during the year. The latter is a

matter respecting which the managers wish more particularly to have an understanding with the men for as many as 150, we are told, have frequently announced their intention of going away for an excursion for a day, thus causing inevitably a considerable stoppage of work. We have heard it stated that as many as 2,300 days have been lost to the proprietor in one month, the workmen taking holidays in this way." (29)

Despite rules and regulations the problem was not easily solved and in the June of 1889 the 2,323 men employed in Penrhyn lost between them $5,789\frac{3}{4}$ working days. (30)

There seems also to have been some "official" unofficial holidays accepted by the community but not by the quarry management, such as Ascension Thursday which was taken as a holiday by Penrhyn quarrymen. It was said that a serious accident was bound to take place if the men worked on that day and

" in order to strengthen this belief it has been ensured that accidents have happened every time there has been an attempt to break the holiday." (31)

Not only the seasonal demands of smallholdings but also social demands such as funerals, often attended by hundreds of men, and fairs could and did claim priority for time which would otherwise have been the quarry's. The right to take the day off if he considered it necessary was held by the quarrymen to be a fundamental one, so it is not surprising that the question of regularity of hours and of days worked loomed as a central issue in most of the major disputes in the industry. The demand that they obtain permission from the manager before absenting themselves from their work

was considered by the men to be a monstrous imposition.

" The permission paper", in the opinion of the

locked out men of Dinorwic in 1885,

" places us on the same ground as the black

slaves in the South of America used to be on ". (32)

This defence of the freedom to decide within limits when

one worked, to some extent reflected the rural patterns

which still exercised some influence over the quarrymen, (33)

but this influence should not be exaggerated. (34)

The bargain system imposed its own pattern of wage negotiation in which power and personalities often mattered more than skill or hard work for the only way that the quarrymen could hope to improve their month to month

bargains and thus their wages was to in some way

influence the setting agent or the higher management which appointed him. For, within wide limits, the setting

steward by his assessment of the rock could give excellent wages or pitiful ones, and variation in

wages could be immense. In Penrhyn in 1865, for example,

a well paid quarryman earned 22/10d a week while one less fortunate bargain taker earned only 6/10d. (35)

This kind of difference could be partly explained by

distinctions of skill, labour and the nature of the rock, but in a functioning bargain and poundage system the partiality of the setting agent could also be central.

Influencing the agents could be done in two ways, individually or collectively. The individual method created a widespread system of bribery and flattery by which the individual crews hoped to grease or buy their way into the favour of the management and thus to easy bargains, good rock or high poundage. The other way, attempted less frequently, but with more dramatic consequences, was to collectively pressurise the management or even to attempt at times to remove the existing management altogether and replace it by one more favourable to the men. Both methods could be effective and both pursued a similar goal - higher wages. As Henry Jones of the Alexandria Lodge, told the N.W.Q.U. annual conference in May 1882,

" there is a particular likeness between the brave and manly Union man and the cowardly and flattering ' cynffonwr' (see below). Both want good recognition for their labour. Both struggle, not in the same way perhaps, but equally energetic, for more of the gold than the silver. They are one in their aim but they separate on the methods used to achieve it." (36)

He went on to uphold the Union method of collective struggle and to condemn the man for whom " the general voice is quite meaningless.. the centre point of all his impulses is himself."

Such men were not uncommon in the slate quarries of the 19th century and the bribery and flattery system which they worked remained as long as the bargaining.

system itself. Robert Parry, the first quarrymen president of the N.W.Q.U., explained that,

" when once a workman felt that an interest was being taken in him greater than his position as workman claimed, there soon would set in a system of peace offerings, and once this began it would, like that of Israel's sins, demand sacrifices every morning and every evening and never be satisfied." (37)

Sacrifices of bacon, beer and self respect. The bribery system could only operate satisfactorily for a minority, a minority which invited the severest moral censure and the hatred and bitterness which existed between them and the Union party is a central part of the story of the quarries, for the difference was hardened by differing allegiances in religion and politics.

This hatred is, perhaps, best summed up by the very term with which the Union men lashed their opponents, " cyffonwyr". Literally it translates as ' flatterers' but cynffon is also the Welsh for tail. The ' cynffonwyr' had grown tails and thus betrayed their animal natures. As a Penrhyn striker explained in 1901 they were,

" creatures of a man's shape with tails, yet they were not men. If Prof. Darwin were living in Bethesda now he would not have to go far to find something to prove his point that man is descended from the ape." (38)

The derision expressed an intensity of hatred which even affected the local Liberal press. One paper wrote that they knew of,

" no class crueller, more loathsome, sicker, dirtier or more dangerous to live or work with

than t he cynffonwyr of our quarries " .

After much more abuse underlining the inhuman nature of the cynffonwyr the paper recommended the quarrymen of Penrhyn and Dinorwic and all other quarries afflicted by such creatures to ,

- 1... not accept them into your houses,
- 2... put your hand on your lips in their presence,
- 3... let them and their property be accursed things to you, (39)

For those others who chose collective struggle and the self sacrifice and threat of repression it invited, the greatest success was the Penrhyn strike of 1874 and the agreement which came of it. The mechanics of that dispute are revealing. (40) The men initially made a demand for a 'standard' wage of 30/- a week for all skilled quarrymen. Penrhyn replied that he could not agree to this but that he would, as a concession. to the men, raise the 'making price' of slates i.e. the price paid to the quarrymen for the slates they produced. In a properly functioning system this could have been acceptable to the men bgt they rejected the offer because, though it was generous, it really did not amount to much if the management persisted in their low wage policies. For wages could still be kept down despite the rise in prices by the agent offsetting the rise by cutting down on the poundage. The men therefore replied that,

" owing to our distrust of the management we are

compelled to decline the offer as it now stands." (41) Management therefore became the central issue of the dispute. " Grant us our demands as they were laid before you at first", the men asked, " or a change in the chief manager ". (42.)

As the dispute proceeded the men came to see a formula which might effectively grant them both demands, an agreement on a ' standard ' of wages and the appointment of a " supreme manager " who would oversee the quarry managers and to whom appeal could be made in cases of unfair treatment or unduly low wages. The men even recommended the man for the job, Mr. Pennant Lloyd the Penrhyn estate agent; they also recommended as a second acting chief manager a Mr. T. H. Owen who would keep a further watch on the existing management.

Given such changes in the structure of management they were willing then to modify their earlier demands for 30/- a week ' minimum standard ' for quarrymen. Their new plan differentiated crucially between bargains set on the men's terms and those taken by men " compelled by the manager to work on his price." In cases of the first type the bargain was to stand whatever the resulting wages, in cases of the second, however, when the crew " fail to realise proper wages on that taking, and they have worked honestly the whole month, that the wages of quarrymen (bargain takers working slate) in such a case, and in such a case only be made up to 28/- per week".

This was to ensure that managerial control of wages was kept to an absolute minimum. The men's demands were eventually granted in substance; the test was to be their implementation and the men's suspicions of the

managers were well founded for when they returned to work they found that the agents were simply ignoring the agreement. The men therefore came out a second time and an arbitration board studied their complaints against the management, out of 19 cases brought forward 17 were sustained and a mass meeting of the men decided that they would

" return to our work under the agreement came to with Mr. Pennant Lloyd and to take lettings from others than the present managers ". (43)

The three managers J. Francis, R. Morris and O.P. Jones were forced to resign and a new chief manager was appointed.

A struggle for improved wages thus became a struggle to limit the power of management, to check their control on the bargaining system. And the battle ended not only with the new structure of management brought about by the appointment of a supreme manager acceptable to the men but also with a built in counter to the setting agent's previous ability to force bargain agreements on to unwilling crews. And with a managerial clique in power for forty years swept out of the quarry and a quarry committee, elected by the men, to investigate " all complaints about letting ". (44)

The committee was able to maintain an effective pressure on the managers. The committee worked very much like a Shop Steward's Committee in that it consisted of the elected representatives of the galleries in the quarry, though there was also an executive committee which met regularly. In later years it was virulently denied that the committee had been

a Union body and its defenders insisted that it had been open to receive complaints from all workers employed in the quarry, irrespective of Union membership. Receive complaints from all quarrymen they did do, but they certainly did not act on any except those coming from Union members and crew No. 158 from Sebastopol Gallery were not alone in having their complaint on wages rejected in November 1881 with the note that "the case was thrown out because they were not Union members".(45)

The committee dealt with a wide range of questions and took up with the managers matters relating to the location and manning of bargains, disciplinary offences against quarry rules, craft questions, disputes between crews, costs payable to the quarry and, above all, questions of wages and poundage. It is difficult to assess how much power the committee actually exerted but, acting as it did as a watch dog on conditions in the quarry, ready to press on management all issues it considered of importance it certainly prevented the management between 1874 and 1885, from having a free rein in the works and from introducing any major new regulations or reorganisation. The number of cases actually taken up was not very great but this might well reflect on an unpreparedness on the part of the managers to carry out unpopular measures which would invite the committee's attentions. Of 41 cases taken up between 1881 and 1884 only four were definitely settled in the management's favour, while a good many were left on verbal compromises and 16 were definitely settled in the men's favour; of these 41 cases, 26 concerned wages in some way.

The quarry committee, while certainly an Union Committee, being in effect the Penrhyn Lodge of the

Union, was democratic and sensitive to all the happenings in the quarry, concerning itself at times even with such mundane matters normally attributed to management as controlling petty thefts. When a complaint about the thieving of slates was received from the Red Lion Gallery in August 1881 the committee did not inform any authority either in the quarry or outside but decided rather that,

" the representatives of the place where there is complaint about the thieves meet to gather in order to arrange something to meet it." (46)

The committee had authority, and could enforce discipline in the quarry as well as face up to management every time they slipped up on the Pennant Lloyd agreement or tried to push any underhand change.

The management and Lord Penrhyn himself came to make many charges of interference and even of intimidation against the record of the committee, but what angered them most was the effect the committee was having on wages, pressing every case in which they thought the men were not being given their due; " the worst part of it is ", complained E.A.Young the manager of the Penrhyn quarries

" the Committee has endeavoured to interfere with the bargain setting, which virtually means managing the quarry... interference such as I mean is practically intolerable... it means pressure on the management in their favour." (47)

Herein lay the strength of the Committee and the danger of Union organisation to the owners in general; the combining of an individualised wages system with a collective consciousness created a situation hard for

management to control; for the whole power of the quarrymen, organised in the committee, could be brought to bear not on a general wages front but on any individual bargain where there was complaint. In such a situation the bargaining strength of the men was much enhanced, for a crew no longer confronted the agents alone but rather with the knowledge, and the threat, that the whole weight of the work force could be swung on to their side if the agents failed to set to the required standard. In such a situation the committee was indeed a severe limitation on the power of management.

And when men and management held different interpretations as to fundamental rights and obligations then this limitation could be exercised with subtleness as well as determination. In defence of the right to work for example, quarrymen exhibited an array of tactics.

By the end of the 19th century slate quarrymen were not often given to wandering; once they settled in one area they tended to stay. This parochialism was, of course, cemented by homes and gardens and pensions but an attitude to the place of work was also important. Men grew to belong to certain quarries and would rarely move. Morgan Richards commented that a

" Bethesda quarryman... would almost rather live on bread and water at Bethesda, were that necessary, than go to Nantlle or Ffestiniog where perhaps he would earn more and live better ". (48)

Once established a family would expect employment for its sons at the quarry; for kinship ties were important determinants in recruitment: of forty five applicants for work in the Penrhyn Quarry in 1896, thirty nine had fathers already at work there, four had brothers, one

an uncle and one a grandfather. (49) Apart from rejecting unfit or quite unsuitable boys, management's ability to freely choose recruits was therefore somewhat limited. Indeed, in some quarries, the situation appears to have been so much in the men's control that it was claimed that rock men were " taken on without any reference at all to management ", (50).

The quarry, therefore, was expected to give continuing employment to the sons of the community and though the men accepted that depression obviously limited the scope for such employment they would not tolerate any attempt to recruit skilled labour from outside their number. One of the underlying causes of the Dinorwic lock out was the resentment felt by the men towards the tendency of the management to recruit.

" children of others who were not tenants, nor children of old workmen". (51)

A resentment inflamed by the suspicion that recruits were being chosen for their political and religious allegiances.

The quarrymen also rejected the idea that an immediate reduction in the labour force was the right reaction to depression. They accepted, as they had to, that some unemployment was inevitable but maintained firmly that

" as it is the worker who brings in the true profit to all works he should be the last to suffer, (52) and they fought determinedly to uphold this principle. In the Penrhyn quarries the initial reaction of the men to the management's proposal for redundancies in November 1878 was total opposition to any sackings and they expressed their willingness to bargain away other

rights in order to maintain the right of all to work. They passed a resolution which pointedly expressed their concern " that we as workmen make an appeal to be allowed to suffer together ", (53) and asked on " what grounds can they meet us without turning anyone away from the works ? ". (54)

The management was sensitive to the feelings of the men and proposed a scrupulous plan for "turning away from the end of the book ", and dismissing only those who had come recently to the quarry, and of those to choose the ones who lived furthest away. Such a scheme, coupled with protection for skilled men was, in fact, accepted by the Quarry Committee, but was rejected by the men as a whole who still opposed all redundancies though they must by then have appeared inevitable.

Other tactics were also employed and enforced to beat the effects of redundancy. In February 1879 the Committee called for

" compelling crews in which there are only two partners to take an additional partner ". (55)

It is not clear whether the initiative for short time working, four days a week, came from the men or the management. Both sides could benefit from such a scheme, the men because it was a means of keeping more men at work and the management by being saved the danger of turning away a number of skilled men who could not be easily replaced come a revival in the trade. Whoever was responsible for introducing it in May 1879, the Quarry Committee was certainly involved in enforcing it. In January 1880 they held meetings throughout the quarry "to set forth the voice of the works namely disapproving of those who worked on Fridays and Saturdays "and in

December 1879 they had talked severly of " the harm to the general body of workmen that some persons come to the works six days instead of four ". It seems however that some men persisted in working full time and were allowed to do so which would suggest that the Committee was more interested than the management in the protection to employment offered by short time working, and in March 1881 it had to call again for all the men to work " but four days a week unless unavoidable circumstances arise in the work". (56)

Work sharing by short time working was therefore one method used by the organised quarrymen in Penrhyn to cushion the effects of unemployment. Another tactic which one might have expected to have been used would have been output control; for the work force to discipline itself to produce less, thus preventing over production and redundancies. Short time working itself was, of course, one way of doing this, the deliberate slowing down of work could have been another. There is no mention in the committee minutes of any such practice but the quarry management seems to have been in little doubt that something like this was going on and blamed an otherwise inexplicable drop of six hundred tons of manufactured slate in September 1879 onto the men's " unconcern". (57)

Employment itself, therefore, was something which was expected from the quarry and during a severe depression extreme measures would be gone to to try and ensure the highest possible employment. To a certain extent managements and quarry owners respected this basic function but the men's defensive actions drove an irritated Morgan Richards to lecture them on the laws

of the economy,

" the working class should pay more attention to the governing laws of trade than they do at the moment... the worker is naturally slow to believe in and realise the disadvantages and difficulties of quarry owners when the market is low and unsettled, but if he had to sell his produce himself he would soon come to understand the effects of the law of ' supply and demand ' on the value of labour ". (58)

Quite so; but the quarryman was not a quarry owner and however much his Union leaders might appear to acquiesce in the theories of supply and demand he himself found no difficulty in interfering in the " natural Law" and defending his right to a job.

The quarry was expected to be sensitive to needs other than the quarry's own and to respect the men's independence. The men expected respect too for their status and their skill for they had a high sense of the dignity of that skill and of the respect which it deserved; and they considered that it deserved better than the bullying of ignorant managers and agents. As the President of the N.W.Q.U. explained in 1901

" if Mr.Young (the manager of the Penrhyn Quarries) thinks that he can work the quarry on the same principles of government as dockwork or brickwork, he is greatly mistaken ". (59)

Quarrymen expected and demanded something better; expected, in fact, " to be treated like men "... (6)

For on the foundation of the bargain system had been built a whole structure of customs and attitudes and beliefs which added up to the only definition of a

quarryman which most of the men could find acceptable. This was a definition resting on a consciousness, almost a mystique, of skill; for slate quarrying was an extraordinarily skilled craft. As the correspondent of the Pall Mall Gazette noted in 1885 ",

" slate quarrying is not a matter of mere manual labour but an art which years of patient practice will hardly require... a slate splitter is like a poet... and contends with the poet on an equal footing at the National Eisteddfod where slate splitting, music and poetry are stock subjects of rivalry ". (61)

In the normal crew of quarrymen there would be two rock men, a splitter and a dresser; the crew might also employ one or two journeymen, young men or boys learning the craft. The rock men worked on the face itself and were primarily responsible for the first stage of placing the explosives charges in the best place and then, with a crowbar, levering off the giant slabs loosened by the blast, this being executed while hanging precariously on the precipitous and shattered face with a rope (or a chain in wet conditions) looped around their thighs. The huge slabs thus prised from the rock were then split into manageable sizes before sending them up to the sheds where the splitters would split the rock with hammer and chisels into fine slates which were then dressed to various sizes.

In the slate mines of Merionethshire a man was usually expected to master either the underground, rock-face skills or the splitting and dressing processes of the sheds; in the open quarries of Caernarfonshire however, while each member of the crew had his special

responsibilities, each was also expected to be able to carry out all the processes, to follow the rock from the face to the finished slate. For what was vital in the work of the quarryman was not so much his skill at using various tools and explosives, but rather his understanding of the nature of the particular bit of rock he was dealing with. Thus a rockman, before laying his charge had to know exactly how big a slab he wanted bringing down and which way it would fall; too big or too small a charge, placed in the wrong place could shatter rather than loosen the rock or could make the getting of further slabs more difficult. As a Ffestiniog rockman pointed out in 1893, being a technically good workman was not the point,

" to bore a hole is one thing, but to know where to put it is quite a different matter." (62)

The splitter, the real aristocrat of the quarry craft, had to be able to tell at a glance what size and quality slate he could coax out of a particular block. It was this understanding of the rock which gave the quarryman's craft such a mystique; looking at the rock and recognizing the " posts, crychs, bends, sparry veins, faults, joints and hardened rock ".etc.,(63) which would affect the work was perhaps the most important part of the quarryman's skill.

This acquaintance with the rock was, moreover, bred of a lifetime of familiarity. There was no defined apprenticeship in the industry and different men took very different periods to learn, some could never learn, " some learn in two what others would not in twenty-two years". (64) What was important was an early start, " they must begin young ", declared the manager of the

New Welsh Slate Company,

" to understand the rock, to thoroughly work it.

A man does not take to slate rock unless he is brought up to it ". (65)

This was particularly true of the above ground slate splitter: one quarryman had " never known of anyone who learnt slate making after 17 or 18". (66)

The rockmen on the other hand often learnt their skills later though it was generally agreed that

" it requires a man to be working for four or five years before he can be considered a good practical rock man"

and one rockman of 33 years experience considered that he had " been at it long enough and I am learning even now". (67)

Ideally a rockman should have spent some years as a slate maker before going on to the face, not because the particular techniques of the sheds would be very useful to him but rather because he could thus learn the " nature and proclivities of the slate ". (68)

With such an emphasis on growing up with the rock it was generally agreed by many outside commentators, as well as by all quarrymen, that no one really understood slate quarrying except slate quarrymen. Morgan Richards warned that,

" let a man be in a quarry ever so long and let him pay all the attention possible to his duties, yet, if not brought up^a quarryman, he can never properly and thoroughly understand quarrying ". (69)

And a quarry manager confessed in the Mining Journal in 1865 that,

" I have read the best German, American, English authors on geology, and I have not seen one single passage in any one of their works that can help, assist or enlighten a quarryman in any one of his operations. It is all very well to talk of things, and compile large volumes , but bring these great authorities face to face with Nature or to a slate quarry and I will be bold enough to affirm that I can point to more than one hard working Welshman that will shame the best of them."

Another correspondent to the Mining Journal three years later, having dismissed the claims of engineers and surveyors to any knowledge of quarrying went on to remind Solicitors, Geologists and Oxonians that they had yet to learn that " a simple quarryman has more real knowledge of slate quarries than they will acquire in a lifetime." Geologists were dismissed in the same breath as retired Soldiers and a Doctor. Bower went so far as to declare that

" an honest quarryman knows more of the appearance of the genuine laminating features, for every working purpose, than all the members of the Geological Society put together".

With the introduction of more complex machinery and electricity into some of the quarries toward the end of the century engineering and technical expertise was not so easily frowned at. (70)

Higher management were not often skilled quarrymen and a considerable number, even of those of local origin, had arisen to their positions through the quarry office rather than the rock face or the splitter's stool. Their competence to manage at all was therefore viewed with

some contempt by most quarrymen. " The agents with whom I have been working," a Ffestiniog Quarryman told a Committee of Inquiry in 1893, " are as incompetent as a child three years old ". (71)

The annual conference of the N.W.Q.U. regularly accused the various managers of " gross mismanagement" and incompetence, a charge which was also forcefully made in Dinorwic in 1885 when the men passed a vote of no confidence in the management; John Davies, the resident manager, who had worked at the Quarry for forty years and had been manager for eleven, and heartily detested, had his claims to proficiency dismissed by the men with the comment that his first twenty-nine years had only given him " experience in figures and nothing more " while during the following eleven years Mr. Davies' opportunities to gain experience in slate quarrying consisted mainly of "a daily walk from his house to the various offices in the works ". As to the qualifications of the haughty principal manager of the quarry, the Hon.W.W.Vivian, a man of some business experience in Lancashire, the men pointed out that

" an extensive experience in a Manchester Mercantile House would qualify a man for a managership of a slate quarry just as much as a knowledge of farming would qualify a young man to be the captain of a ship." (72)

Managers should, it was held by the men, be either skilled men themselves or have passed an examination in " practical quarrying " (which presumably only a skilled quarryman could do). Business expertise did not impress, what the men considered essential, was skill at the job.

Their distrust of management ^{as we have seen earlier} was deepened by the

inability of many managers to speak Welsh. (73)

John Williams, a quarryman, recalled in 1942 how an English manager visiting his quarry saw a man smoking, and asked " Do you allow this idleness ?", the accompanying agent explained that the man was, in fact, studying the rock as well as smoking. This episode, concluded Williams, proved that " a quarry cannot be worked in English ". (74)

A hundred years earlier in the 1840s a David Jones had sung,

" Os bydd eisiau cael swyddogion,	(If officials are needed,
Danfon ffwrdd a wneir yn union,	(A call is made at once,
Un ai Gwyddel, Sais neu Scotsman,	(Either Irishman, English or Scots
Sydd mewn swyddau braidd ymhobman.	(Are in jobs almost everywhere.

Mewn gweithfeydd sydd yma'n Nghymru,	In works here in Wales,
Gwelir Saeson yn busnesu;	(Englishmen can be seen interfering,
Rhaid cael Cymry i dorri'r garreg,	(You must get Welshmen to break the stone,
Nid yw'r graig yn deall Saesneg".	(For the rock does not understand English. (75)

" The English element ", explained Robert Parry to the annual conference of the Union in May 1882, " was... very damaging to the success of the quarrymen ". (76)

Few present would not have nodded in agreement. (77)

The quarrymen were the masters of an immensely

complicated and delicate craft, a craft which they well knew only they could exercise. For the quarrymen had no doubt but that they were in all respects " the best class of workmen in the United Kingdom ", (78) a description they often adopted for themselves. And the very " attitudes " of managements and agents caused them much pain and were as much in dispute as wages and conditions. (79)

The agents they considered to be insufferably arrogant and rude, refusing to acknowledge the quarryman's morality and skill. (80) The kind of taunt they had to suffer was retold in April 1882; a quarryman explained to a manager that he could not face his creditors because of his low wages, a plea to which the manager replied by advising him that if he could not face them he should " walk towards them backwards ". (81) Such a comment, and many worse, cut their pride like a knife. An elegy for such a manager expressed the resentment; there was nothing to rejoice in except his unpopularity.

" Oes faith ddi-broffit dreuliodd hwn

Gan chwyddo rhif gormeswyr

Ac yma mae ei arch a'i fedd.

Ond ple y mae'r galarwyr ? ". (82)

As we have seen the degree of supervision varied considerably from quarry to quarry, for slate quarrying

itself entailed a great many supervisable processes and a degree of what could be called 'policing' activity had been a feature of the industry since the early decades of the century, checking, for example, such important details as whether the men were actually producing as many slates as they said they were. Large scale quarrying, however, called for more extensive organisation and its effective management needed a considerable array of skills, pre-eminently in engineering, and not only a practical knowledge of actually working the rock. Quarrying had to be carefully organised and planned in advance and one authority lamented that plans could not be worked out beforehand to last for a hundred, or even two hundred, years. (83) The reason is fairly obvious, a rapid concentration on one section of the quarry would soon bring higher parts crashing down, areas which could be long unprofitable to work would still have to be cleared in the long term interest, rubbish tips had to be placed in parts which would not in the future need to be quarried etc. The continuing difficulty for both management and men was that a long term plan was not always apparent and the short term attractions of profitability were always tempting; when a period of reorganization was finally forced on the working of the quarry both sides accused the other of having sacrificed the long term interests of the quarry for easy money.

The Penrhyn management claimed in 1885 that the men had hitherto controlled the organisation of the quarry by insisting on working only good rock, leaving the unproductive rock to be cleared at some future date

when it would be absolutely necessary, and expensive, to remove such rubbish before normal work could resume. Without "proper supervision, many a bargain may be spoilt through over-anxiety of the men to make good wages " (84) complained the manager of the Aberllefenny Quarry in 1893; and a quarry was not much more than a collection of bargains.

The men, of course, hotly denied that there was ever such a tendency in their work, complaining bitterly that all the difficulties were due to incompetent management; managers were " too keen to make big profits " complained Dewi Peris in 1875 and consequently quarried too deep into the mountainside without clearing the tops of the galleries thus causing both danger and trouble for the future. (85)

Most of the prosecuting charges, for example, that it was more profitable for quarrymen working very low poundages to throw away good slate as subbish (and to be paid by the ton for it) than to actually make slates out of it were normally proven, an indictment of managerial policies. But men's defence briefs were not so convincing, there was probably some truth in the management's charges against short-sighted working by the men. It is, however, difficult to access the truth as most of the arguments vied with each other in drama rather than in detail; the Dinorwic Quarry, the locked out men of 1885 claimed, would " completely fall in " if the existing manager continued in control, a prophecy which subsequent years did not substantiate.

To the new men in control of the larger quarries in the 80s and 90s, to the new Lord Penrhyn himself, and to men like his manager E.A.Young and the Dinorwic

manager W.W. Vivian, it was obvious that to pursue the industry profitably it would be necessary to break the independence and the control of the men, and if they overstated the degree of that control there is no reason why it should ^{be} underestimated.

Gazing out in the early 1880s from the turrets of his father's monstrous Norman revivalist folly, Penrhyn Castle, the future Lord Penrhyn must often have wondered about how much control he really had over his quarries. They produced the profits regularly and generously enough, (87) but the 2,500 men at work there had virtually all spent their whole working lives among the galleries and sheds there, they knew infinitely more about the place than he or any of his managers, and their skill, the source of his wealth, was a mystery to him. They spoke a foreign language, worshipped in Nonconformist chapels, and had voted en bloc against him when he stood for Parliament. In 1874 they had unseated the whole management and set up their North Wales Quarrymen's Union, with the assistance of prominent Radicals, and a Quarry Committee, which leapt on his present management whenever it acted contrary to the quarrymen's wishes. His charities no longer bought allegiance. He was unsure what the men were doing much of the time and they seemed to be coming and going as they pleased. Their independence made them an uncontrollable workforce, unwilling to obey the capricious demands of a by-now disturbed market.

For W.W. Vivian, trained ⁱⁿ Manchester business, the rules which he was trying to impose on the Dinorwic men seemed exceedingly reasonable and sensible; real factory rules, he claimed, were much harsher.

" If the men ", he charged with some exasperation,

" will take the trouble to get a copy of factory rules, or of those in use in any real business company, they will at once see the great leniency of the new rules ". (88)

The Dinorwic quarrymen, however, would accept nothing that smelt of factory discipline without a fight and they resisted for 5 months the attempt to bring

" the works under the same rules as the works in England, that is the factories, a thing which is quite impossible and the attempt to do so betrays a lack of experience and common sense. Because to bring such a big, wide and open works such as this under the strict rules of the factories is lunacy ", (89) for that would mean " the best class of Welsh workmen being trodden upon as mere slaves ". (90)

For them slavery and factory discipline were synonymous.

We can only guess at the masters' strategy but it seems fairly definite that they intended to pursue a two pronged policy; the bargain system, on which so much else depended, could not be dropped at will, its hold and its demands were too extensive, so an attempt was made on the one hand ^{to} minimise the effects of the system while on the other hand gradually introducing an altogether new wages system. The rules and regulations which pinched the quarrymen so hard were the means to achieve the former aim while the latter was to be satisfied by the extension of the contract system. We have already noted the attempt to introduce boys into contract work in the early 80s and there was a strong suspicion by the end of the century that Penrhyn's

long term aim was to completely re-create his skilled workforce, to bring up a whole generation of quarrymen in a disciplined fashion. (91)

Commenting on the Dinorwic Lock Out of 1885 - 6 a reporter noted that the dispute was not a matter of wages

" simply a matter of sentiment; whether the quarry should be worked under one set of rules or another set of rules and whether the men or the managers shall be permitted to regulate the business ". (92)

The question was nicely stated; the quarrymen did not claim that the quarries were theirs and they were always extremely respectful towards the owners, but what they did assume was that they had the right to regulate the way they were worked, the right to have some control over their own working lives. This was an assumption, rarely a claim; the men were usually adamant in their denials that they wished in any way to interfere in the " rightful " concerns of their employers. Rule 2 of the Union caught the contradiction; the Union's aim was to,

" resist any infringements that may be attempted

by employers upon the established rights and privileges of the quarrymen of North Wales...

it is not intended that this Union is in any

way to interfere in the management in any works." (93)

Protecting their " established rights and privileges" usually entailed a degree of ' interference' in management which the quarry owners found unpalatable. And at times such interference was admitted and its rationale eloquently articulated; R. Jones, a Dinorwic quarryman explained to a mass meeting in 1885,

" there were some who denied the rights of the workmen to have a voice in the management of the works, and that that was the privilege of the master, who had invested his money, his capital, in the quarries.... this partly true, but when the master was not careful in his selection of proper agents, the workmen under such circumstances had a right to raise their voices and object because the appointment of incompetent managers endangered their lives. If the argument that the master, because he invested his capital, had the right to appoint the managers, was logic, then for the very same reason, the workmen ought to have a voice in their appointment. What were the workmen's labour and their lives, but their capital ?. How many workmen had lost their capital in the Dinorwic Quarries, and how many orphans and widows were there in the neighbourhood of Llanberis who had seen their capital brought home in pieces upon a bier. These facts... justified their present action in raising their voices against the incompetence of the head manager." (94)

Such feelings were not often expressed but the quarrymen did feel that they had invested their labour and their lives in the quarries, and that they therefore had a stake in the way they were run.

This consciousness did, of course, find political articulation, the nationalisation of the quarries seems to have been discussed by Nantlle quarrymen in the early 1890s and in 1886 a delegate from Penmaenbach had declared, to the approval of the N.W.Q.U. annual conference, that if the masters could not work the quarries without losing money then,

" should they not be forced to sell their works and mines for reasonable royalties and let the working class try their hand ". (95)

But such schemes made little headway. More popular was the ideal of co-operative quarries and two attempts were made to launch such ventures:: in 1880 the N.W.Q.U. invested £2,000 in a co-op quarry and one of the results of the 1900 - 3 lock out was the setting up of another trade union backed co-operative quarry. The nationalisation of the land, on which, of course the quarries stood, was also a popular notion for if the ownership of the quarries, of the productive units, was not in dispute, the ownership of the mountains in 19th century Wales certainly was. " Do not go back to Egypt my people", a speaker urged a mass meeting of Dinorwic quarrymen in 1885, " demand the Elidir again.." (96) Dinorwic was the quarry, the Elidir was the mountain itself.

Politics and religion sharpened and soured industrial relations in the quarries; every squabble was defined as a clash of cultures and traditions, of allegiances and values. The battle line was clear,

When they went into battle, slate quarrymen fought not only as workers but also as Radicals and as Nonconformists, they carried with them the whole cultural apparatus of the communities they had created, and in a profound sense, community and social pressures were important in the industrial struggle in the quarries. For the structures of community and quarry were largely incompatible. Though it is dangerous to oversimplify it is largely true that the quarry villages were dominated by the Nonconformist chapels, by the norms of hard work, thrift and respectability while the quarries on the other hand were where the shifty, the unprincipled, the flatterer ready to sell his religion and his character often rose to acquire dictatorial powers. The setting agents, the stiwardiau bach, the men who got the best bargains were often men of this type, men who could work the patronage system and who owed their position least of all to their skill at the job.

It was this inverted structure which made conditions in the quarry so intolerable for the hierarchy of the village; God-fearing and respectable men finding themselves so often spurned and insulted by the hierarchy of the quarry. As the Dinorwic quarrymen complained in 1885,

" no high price is put at the Dinorwic Quarries for manly independence, honesty, faithfulness to work and good workmanship.. (but) that which degrades (the workman) is covered with favour, and receives a reward that which should only be given to the best and most honourable of the class ". (97)

The village was dominated by the mainstream of Welsh culture, nonconformity, Liberalism and the principles, if not of trade unionism, then of collective, democratic organisation. The values which ran the two major quarries of North Wales, however, were fashioned by the Tory Party, paternalism, Anglicanism and the English language. It was this perpetual conflict between two systems and two cultures which ensured the bitterness and persistence of the battle for the quarries.

The slate quarrymen, therefore, fought consciously as members of a well defined community with its own values and aims and this perspective should not be lost. But the fact that it needed only a translation of terms to turn the decades-old struggle against Anglicanism

into an industrial battle, for the enemy, an alien squirearchy, remained the same, should not distract from the fact that North Wales at this time was witnessing disputes which were, for the men involved, essentially about work, about how and when it should be done and about how much should be paid for it. For the activist Welsh middle class Radicals, usually the publicists of the quarrymen's struggles, the perspective was different and they consistently drafted the strikes and lock outs of the quarries to their own continuing campaign against Landlordism and the Anglican Church. For them caught between a suspicion of the quarrymen and an enduring hatred of landlordism the battles in the quarries were seen, invariably, as blows for religious and political emancipation rather than as battles for freedom at work.

The quarrymen, themselves, were prone to extravagant language and an Old Testament turn of phrase and people who speak in the language of the pulpit, in moral absolutes, in terms of justice and basic human rights and principles, as the quarrymen consistently did when discussing their industrial relations, do invite misunderstanding. But whatever such words might mean to us, they seemed to them appropriate terms for the concrete realities of their own working lives, the least we should do is take them at their word; the nature of the work men and women must do, a central experience in the lives of the vast majority, might well deserve such a vocabulary. The principles the quarrymen fought for were intimately concerned with their working lives, with working hours, and holidays, with wages and wages systems, with work discipline,

rates for the job and managerial prerogatives. They were no less noble principles for that. For the quarrymen sensed accurately enough that what was at stake was fundamental: " we have been told," wrote the Dinorwic Quarrymen's Committee in 1885, " that we are too independent." Their reply was that, " we must fight like men or fall lower than men ". (98).

CHAPTER III. Work and Control.

1. Report Quarry Committee of Inquiry, (1893)
Appendix III, p.47. see also William Jones.M.P.
Hansard Parliamentary Debates, vol cxviii,
5. 3. 1903. p.1651.
2. " In a full week, exclusive of mealtimes, about
46% of the total number of Men and Boys
worked 52hours, 36% from 54½ to 57 hours,
17% about 50 hours; and of the remainder, some
worked 46 to 49 (miners) hours and others
about 58½ hours. The full time worked at open
quarries would be reduced by bad weather and
short days in winter". These figures are
averages covering all of North Wales" quarries
(Return of Rates of Wages in Mines and Quarries
in the U.K. with Report 1890 - 91, lxxviii
pp. 667 - 8. The figures apply to 1. 10. 1886.)
3. ibid., these 13 groups of workers added up
to only 9.7% of the total workforce.
4. Caernarfonshire copper mines knew the system
in the 18th century and the Cornish tribute
system was similar; slate quarries in Anjou,
France and the Bassin d'Herbenmont in Belgium
were also worked on similar lines, in Belgium
there was a " contrat de travail" between
" societies" of four or five men and the
employer (E. Savoy, " Ardoisier du Bassin
d'Herbeumont Belgique," Les Ouvriers des Deux
Mondes (Paris 1905) pp 180 - 182); in Anjou.
" la plupart des ouvriers d'a bas et d'a haut
travaillent au marchandage " (M.Poperen,
Un Siècle de Luttès au Pays de l' Ardoise
1972, p.34.

5. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 12. 8. 1865.
6. The Lock Out in the Dinorwic Quarries. 1885. p.5.
7. See D. Dylan Pritchard, "Trade Unionism",
Quarry Manager's Journal (January 1945); and
for a discussion of this problem in another
industry J. G. Rule, "The tribute system and
the weakness of trade unionism in the Cornish
mines", Bulletin Society for the Study of Labour
History (Autumn 1970.)
8. Comparisons with slate quarrymen in other
countries are interesting. Belgian and Breton
quarrymen were involved in no significant
collective actions in the 19th century, Anjon
slate quarrymen, on the other hand, were amongst
the most militant and class-conscious of
French workers, being involved in almost constant
clashes between 1900 and 1913 and being
enthusiastic supporters of anarchist and
anarcho-sydicalist ideas. (M. Poperen op.cit.)
9. U.C.N.W. Coetmor Mss. 46, p.30. n.d.
10. Morgan Richards, Slate Quarrying and How to
Make it profitable. n.d. p.19.
11. Caernarfonshire Record Office, Bulletin.
12. ibid.
13. N.L.W. W.J. Parry, Mss. (4), 87360, 29.12.1877.
14. CRO M/622/11, 19. 5. 1879.
15. Cofnodydd, Caebraichycafn, 14. 11. 1884.
16. Parry, op. cit. p.74.
17. see ibid., p. 172 - 3.
18. see pp. 387 - 390
19. C & D Herald, 15.8.74.
20. Report on Meirionethshire Mines, op. cit., 1186.

22. Joseph Kellow, The Slate Trade in North Wales,
(Mining Journal Reprint, 1868, p.9.
23. Richards, op. cit., p.71.
24. William Jones, house of Commons, 5.3.1903,
(Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol 118,
(4th Series), 1651.)
25. Return of Wages in Mines and Quarries, p.667.
26. Report of H.M. Inspector of Mines, (1875) p.385.
27. Mining Journal, 15. 4. 1865.
28. Report on Merionethshire Mines, 3140.
29. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald, 12. 1. 1878.
30. GAS 55/27, Penrhyn Quarry Wages Book, June
1889.
31. Y Genedl Gymreig, 24. 5. 1882.
32. Royal Commission on Labour, question 16,846.
33. see pp. 5 - 9.
34. Slate quarrymen in other countries were also
known for their independence at work; in
Anjou " Le fendeur " (slate splitter)
organise son travail à sa guise, il commence
et termine sa journée aux heures qui lui
conveniennent", (M. Poperen, op. cit., p.64);
in Belgium "L'organisation du travail d'abord
est telle que l'ouvrier conserve une grande
indépendance ". (E. Savoy op.cit. p.181.)
35. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 12. 8. 1865.
36. Y Genedl Gymreig, 24. 5. 1882.
37. Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald, 28.5.1881.
38. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 6.8.1901.
39. UCNW, Coetmor Mss. No.45. n.d.
40. Parry, op. cit., p.7 - 24.
41. ibid., p.12.

42. ibid., p.16.
43. ibid.
44. ibid.
45. Cofnodydd Fenderfyniadau Pwyllgor y Gwaith,
Caebraichycafn, 25. 11. 1881.
46. CRO M/622/11, 18. 8. 1881.
47. Parry, op. cit., p.
48. Richards, op.cit., p.49.
49. Penrhyn Quarry Letter Book, 11. 6. 1896.
50. Report on Merionethshire mines, p.316.
51. The Lock Out..Dinorwic Quarries,
52. Y Genedl Gymreig, 2. 2. 1882.
53. Copy, minutes of the Quarry Committee, GAS
M/ 622/11. 19. 11. 1878.
54. ibid., 21. 11. 1878.
55. ibid., 17. 2. 1879.
56. ibid., /1/1880: 29. 12. 1879; 25. 3. 1881.
57. ibid. 8. 9. 1879.
58. Y Genedl Gymreig, 12. 1. 1882.
59. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 24. 12. 1901.
60. Daily News, 8. 1. 1901.
61. UCNW, Coetmor Mss. No. 46., p.30.
62. Report on Merionethshire Mines, 2477.
63. D. C. Davies, A Treatise on Slate and Slate
Quarrying, (1880) p. 118.
64. Report on Merionethshire Mines, 2473.
65. Royal Commission on Labour, Minutes of Evidence,
Group A 11. (1892) question No. 9387.
66. Report on Merionethshire Mines, 905.
67. ibid., 1596; 3117.
68. ibid., 1977.
69. Richards, op. cit., p.29.

70. Mining Journal, 22. 4. 1865; 11. 1. 1868.
71. Report on Merionethshire Mines, 2677.
72. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald, 23. 1. 1886.
73. Some words were originally English eg. 'rybelwrs' had started off as 'rubbelers' and some English terms were used, the classification of slate sizes according to the noble hierarchy for example (Duchesses etc) but most quarry words were Welsh, for a glossary see, Emyr Jones, Canrif y Chwarelwr, (Gwasg Gee, Denbigh, 1965.)
74. John Williams, "Atgofion Chwarelwr" Y Llenor, Gaeaf 1942 pp. 129 - 135, p.34 - 5.
75. British Museum, Welsh Songs etc, 1767 - 1870. No. 69.
76. Y Genedl Gymreig, Mai 24, 1882.
77. The feeling was mutual " these Welshmen" thought E.A.Young " are so ignorant and childish" PQLB 28. 11. 1900.
78. see, for example, The Lock Out at the Dinorwic Quarries, p.1.
79. see Parry, op. cit., p. 172 - 3,
80. see Yr Herald Cymraeg, 5. 2. 1901.
81. Y Genedl Gymreig, 5. 4. 1882.
82. ibid.
83. Dewi Peris, "Chwarelyddiaeth", Y Geninen, vol. XIV (January 1896) p. 52.
84. Report on Merionethshire Mines, 4500.
85. Dewi Peris, op. cit., July 1896.
86. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald, 23. 1. 1896.
87. It was estimated in October 1894 that Lord Penrhyn, " who is one of the richest men in the

Welsh Principality" had been making about
 £100,000 a year from his quarries, Our Gazette,
 (Nat. Assoc. of Slate Merchants and Slaters)
 (Hull, October 1894) p.2. In 1890 he made
 £133,000 net profit, Penrhyn Quarry Letter
Book, 7. 1. 1899.

88. Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald, 30. 1. 1886.
89. Y Genedl Gymreig, 29. 7. 1885.
90. The Lock Out Dinorwic Quarries, p.7.
91. see Yr Herald Cymraeg, 19. 11. 1901.
92. Pall Mall Gazette (Coetmor Mss. No. 46. p.30.) nd
93. Richards, op. cit., p. 140.
94. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald, January 2. 1886.
95. Y Genedl Gymreig, 26. 5. 1886.
96. ibid, 16. 12. 1885.
97. The Lock Out Dinorwic, p.7.
98. Y Genedl Gymreig, 16. 12. 1885.

The North Wales Quarrymen's Union:

The First Decade.

1. BOOM..

In January 1865 the Mining Journal carried an article reporting, in glowing terms, the settled and prosperous state of the slate quarrying industry.

In capital letters it declared that

" THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A STRIKE AMONG WORKMEN IN SLATE QUARRIES, and it seems improbable, (nay, even impossible) that there ever should be.. " (1)

The author was not quite correct in his reading of the past for there had been disputes and disturbances in the industry, notably in the Penrhyn Quarry in 1800, 1825 and 1846; (2) he was even more sadly amiss as to the future: within a few months of his wr iting the Penrhyn Quarries we re stopped by a strike and the ideas of trade unionism were finding some currency.

There had been unrest and dissatisfaction in Penrhyn for some time. In May the Herald Cymraeg reported on the high number of Bethesda quarrymen who were emigrating to the U.S. because of low wages

" there is particular complaining... this month, a very great many don't receive half a decent wage ".(3)

The main complaint of the men however was not just that wages were low, much lower than in other quarries, but also that they fluctuated greatly. Of a sample of 46 crews consisting of 169 men for one month the highest earnings for one crew were £18. 5s. 3d., between the four members of the crew this worked out at £4. 11s. 4d., each, 22/10d a week. The lowest paid crew however earned only £5. 9s. 10d. for a month's work - 6/10d a week. (4)

Out of their original wages the men were forced to make several deductions which could make an already low wage abysmally so. Thus a crew that earned £7. 3s. 1d. for a month's work at Penrhyn in 1865 had to make the following payments back to the quarry:-

for explosives	7.	0d.
carpenter	1.	0d.
blacksmith	3.	9d.
sick club	3.	0d.
coal	9.	0d.

Which left the four men £5. 19. 4d. to share between them for a month's work. (5)

In response to this situation the Penrhyn quarrymen had in early 1865 set up a committee of 13 to press their demand for better wages. This movement was limited to the lower parts of the quarry which were under the management of W. Francis. The higher section of the quarry, under Francis' son Capt. John Francis, did not share to the same extent the grievances of the others. In May the committee formulated its demands and wrote a gentlemanly letter to Francis pointing out the low wages being earned and asking for a change in the wages system which would allow them to receive between £1. and 25/- a week but not be " under any circumstances, less than a pound ". In putting forward this demand they had in mind a minimum norm which the setting stewards should consider when setting bargains: what had previously been a matter between management and men as to a fair and reasonable bargain

was not to be defined in cash terms.

It was not a demand for a straight minimum wage but rather for a minimum wage given a fair day's work. It was a demand which was to be repeated later in the century and a whole series of terms - average, mean, standard, minimum, came to be used by both sides to try and define what was a very elusive concept. The difficulty arose because the demand introduced a degree of standardisation into what was as we have seen, theoretically a series of individual agreements and not a wages system at all. The men wanted a defined common basis for all the separate agreements, the management and owners saw no need for one other than their own "fair mindedness".

In seeking such a basis the Penrhyn quarrymen in 1865 were responding to the virtual break-down of the ideal bargaining system. They had come to understand only too well that they were no longer the free contractors of the early days of the industry but normal employees of a capitalist concern, which, because of technical and geological difficulties, had an individualist form to its wages system.

The men followed up their initial letter with a deputation to see Francis and by sending a copy to Colonel Pennant (later Lord Penrhyn) the owner of the quarry. Another interview took place with Francis when the politeness so far characteristic of the negotiations

faded somewhat and a fierce argument took place. Francis promised to look into individual complaints but refused to "deal with them collectively as a body"; (6) a reply that was to echo down the century through the spacious halls of Penrhyn Castle and the cliffs of the Quarry. In June Francis informed one of the deputation that he was no longer to work in the quarry, a threat that he quickly rescinded when news of the men's angry response reached his ears.

The bargains for July were set and worked as usual and the deputation decided to aim its demands at Pennant rather than Francis. He proved inaccessible however being at that time involved in winning his seat in Parliament. After several more fruitless meetings with Francis the men set an ultimatum demanding that the terms of the coming August bargain-setting be on a new basis. When the ultimatum ran out with still no reply the men's committee resigned and Mr. Francis was brought face to face with 900 men. He offered to listen to any individual complaints. No-one took up his invitation, he then went round the quarry to set the bargains only to find that there was no-one to set them to. The men were on strike and their committee was re-elected.

All this time the men in the upper galleries of the quarry managed by Francis' son, worked as usual. A mass picket in which all the 900 men on strike lined up and, taking off their hats, turned their backs on those going to work soon brought the others out, however, and the whole quarry stopped. The new strikers now added their representatives to the committee and Robert Parry, whom we shall meet again, was elected chairman. In his address to a mass meeting Parry impressed on the

men the need for peaceful and sober behaviour and he saw their struggle as one to make them equal to the quarrymen in other parts of North Wales. The meeting decided that the committee should no longer negotiate with Francis (he was not talking to them anyway) but should rather go straight to Pennant. Consequently, a delegation met with Arthur Wyatt, the Penrhyn estate manager, who read to them a letter from Pennant in which the owner explained that while he was opposed to giving wages to any predetermined level he was willing to order his managers to give the men "good" wages; he added, ominously, that before he would allow the men to frighten him he would let the quarry to a contractor. During the interview that followed and in others with Pennant himself it became obvious that the real point at issue was that the men had lost all confidence in Francis' fair management; they wanted not promises but assurances. A mass meeting in fact passed a vote of no confidence in Francis but Pennant refused to remove him.

Despite Pennant's promises therefore the men refused to go back without something more concrete than a declaration of intent. Finally they accepted Pennant's word and a rise of wages some 3/- in the pound which was a small rise,

" for those taken by the pound, but it will do well for those who work their rock according to the price of the slates, and it will also benefit the rybelwrs" .(7)

The 1865 strike, through the new sense of organised and collective action which it had introduced had other consequences too. In November, almost three months after

the men returned to work, an attempt was made to create a more permanent defensive organisation than that which the ad hoc strike committee had offered. On a Saturday morning in November between 1,200 and 1,500 men gathered on the slopes of Mynydd y Cefn (8) to launch Cymdeithas Undebol Chwarelwyr Cymru which was to fight for a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. The new union, it was proclaimed, would not encourage rebellion against anyone and its establishment was not to be seen as showing a lack of confidence in the Hon.Col.Pennant.

The secretary of the strike committee, Robert Thomas became secretary of the new organisation and Robert Parry was a prominent supporter of the move.

After several speakers had counselled caution and wisdom and pointed out that strength lay in unity the meeting passed two resolutions, one thanking " the friends in America " presumably for assistance during the strike, the second a vote of confidence in Pennant thanking him for his generous behaviour towards them. 1543 Penrhyn quarrymen joined the new union. (9.)

Despite the men's protestations Pennant took grave offence at this new development and he showed his displeasure in a notice which declared that he would not tolerate any attempt " to form a species of Trade Union among the quarrymen ", any such attempt would force him to close the quarry and he " would only re-open it and his cottages to those men who declare themselves averse to any such scheme ". (10) Faced with such a threat the men apologised for their impertinence and promptly dissolved their union.

The union had been a purely local organisation and there is no evidence that any attempt was (11) made to

spread it to include other quarrymen. And yet its name suggested that its founders aimed at it being eventually a national (i.e. Welsh) organisation.

The effectiveness of Penrhyn's control over the men was again demonstrated in the 1868 election. 1868, the year of Welsh political emancipation, was not a glorious one in the history of Bethesda. For in that year, with a trebled electorate, the hold of the Penrhyn family over the Caernarfonshire parliamentary seat was challenged and broken by a Liberal, Jones Parry. He carried the seat with 1,963 votes against Lord Penrhyn's son, George Sholto Douglas Pennant's 1,815 votes. In Bangor, Betws-y-Coed and Bethesda, however, all areas under some direct Penrhyn influence, Pennant had a majority. In Bethesda the number of Liberal votes was particularly small - 47 out of a total of 359, this despite the enthusiastic pro-Jones Parry meetings held in the town before the election. (12)

Those brave enough to be public Liberals in Penrhyn's domain were soon made to pay the price. Following the pattern of victimisation and eviction set by the Tory landlords of West Wales, fighting desperately to retain their political hegemony, Penrhyn sacked and intimidated scores of prominent Liberals. In 1869

Baner ac Amser am Cymru reported that

"several quarrymen from Caebraichycafn are these days emigrating to the United States. If they have not been exactly turned out of their work, at least they have been squeezed out of there. Every man of Liberal principles possessing enough manliness to proclaim his principles, whether he has a vote or no, is a marked man".--(13)

Lord Penrhyn, in fact , had

"no hesitation in saying that if a workman is habitually discontented and persistently gives trouble, the employer is perfectly justified in no longer employing him ". (14.)

And acting on this promise Penrhyn in 1870 purged his quarries of agitators dismissing " over 80 quarrymen, most of them among the best men in the quarry in character and work... without any reason being given ". (15)

Condemned by the Welsh press this action was loyally accepted by the Penrhyn quarrymen who themselves held an apparently well attended meeting in June 1870 to

" protest against the slur cast upon the respected stewards and the generous and kind proprietor of the work ". (16)

They resented especially the words of a local radical columnist who castigated them as being "white slaves".(17) On the contrary, the men protested, the sackings had been perfectly justified by the downward turn in the slate trade and even one of the dismissed maintained that this was so and that he was no radical and had helped with the plans for a union (in 1865) against his own will. Such was Penrhyn's power.

In 1874 Pennant comfortably re-gained his seat, for despite the B allot Act which had come into operation since 1868, the fear of victimisation and a genuine sense of obligation toward their master demanded a vote, not for Toryism, but for the Penrhyn family. Even prominent Nonconformist figures such as Tanymarion (18) (the Rev. Edward Stephen) and a host of deacons (19) sat on Penrhyn's platform and spoke on his behalf.

The Liberal Welsh press was furious and lashed out

at the subservience of the quarrymen. 'Y Llais ar Talcen Mawr ' the perceptive Herald Cymraeg columnist on Bethesda affairs wrote,

" Does Wales know, I wonder, that the workers of Chwarel y Cae are slaves, perfect slaves. Ever since the election of 1868 they slip further every year into the hold of servility, until most of them have by now lost the last grain of independence... they will have to be squeezed almost to death before they will shout ". (20)

Despite the election result the early months of 1874 saw a consciousness stirring.. " Y mae swn ym mrig y morwydd "(21) noticed the editor of the Herald Cymraeg in early April and a correspondent in his columns a fortnight earlier, addressing himself to his " fellow workmen in Chwarel y Cae " had asked

" How can we tolerate the idea that the handful of Anglicans and the occasional 'cynffon' in our midst in the works can lock our lips so that none of us dare say anything except that which goes along with their shibboleth... see that we have suffered quite enough up to now by our cowardice; and we are ready to submit and shout " we have sinned " .

And the accumulated bitterness of individual grievances was indeed intense and the continuing management of Francis heartily detested.

Resistance and the new mood came, however, not from Penrhyn but from Dinorwic . During the election the quarrymen of Llanberis had voted for Penrhyn at the request of their master G.W.Duff Assheton-Smith but the election meetings

had been accompanied by considerable excitement and activity. (22) This coincided with a crisis in the quarry; the manager, a Mr. O. Parry, had died on February 15th and had been buried by a thousand people. Within the next week a rumour circulated through the quarry that his successor was to be a retired schoolmaster, a suggestion that appalled the men as they could not accept that such a man would have the experience or the knowledge to properly manage the works. A letter of protest was thus sent to Asshegton-Smith and an interview arranged between four representatives of the men and Smith's agent (Col. Wyatt). While this interview was taking place the rest of the 2,500 quarrymen stopped work and surrounded the office "like a stout wall", some even sat on the roof. The stewards had made some attempt to prevent this move but found it was as impossible as attempting to stop a "waterfall from going over the cliff". The outcome of the negotiations and demonstration was a promise that the schoolmaster would not be appointed and that the next manager would be a man who "understood practical quarrying".

Things were not to rest there, however, for the Dinorwic men had become conscious of the need for a Union and the newly formed committee to discuss the management question was asked to

"take heed of the suggestion... for a Union, and the earlier the better". (23)

In April Llais o'r Talcen Mawr again launched an attack on conditions in Bethesda

"if things do not get better in the next few months than make a strike, yes indeed, strike". (24)

The next week he continued on the same theme, warning

" those at the root of the present oppression on the workers... walk on, my friends, your impudence will reach its climax before long, I hope. Give the screw one more turn and the people here will shout out. And you watch out for the consequences " (25)

A warning that was to prove prophetic.

It was from Llanberis that action was now expected, for if they set an example "... demanding their independence.. then the Bethesda quarrymen will come slowly to follow your example". (26)

In April a group of Llanberis men, visited several well known local Radical personages with the proposal that they become the officers of a new quarrymen's union, and the first meeting of the union was held in the Queens Hotel, Caernarfon on April 27th. Some mystery surrounds the early weeks of the union and it is not clear who its first officials were. J.Roose Williams claims that Morgan Richards was the first President (27) but there is no mention of him in the Minute Book of the Union for 1874. His connection with the new venture was however very close (28) and it is quite possible that he was President for a few months. By September, however, the President was John Lloyd Jones, " extensive quarry proprietor in the Nantlle Vale". (29) The first meeting had representatives of the quarrymen of Llanberis, Talysarn, Cilgwyn and Welsh Slate Co. Blaenau Ffestiniog, but the non-quarryman element was strong. Hugh Pugh, chairman (and perhaps also treasurer) was a Caernarfon bank manager, the auditor was W.J.Williams a schoolteacher become accountant, the trustee J.O.Griffith (Ioan Arfon) was a poet and writer and two others J.J.Hughes and

W.E. Williams were journalists. And the General Secretary was the redoubtably Radical and prosperous Bethesda accountant and tradesman W.J. Parry.

From the first the union was conceived as one covering all the Welsh slate quarrymen, as its name implies. It does seem, however, to have approached another unknown Union in its first weeks of existence perhaps with a view to amalgamation. (30)

With no reply forthcoming, however, it was determined to go it alone and to "accept in all classes of workers which are connected with quarrymen and the slate ports belonging to the quarries and receiving their pay from their owners". (31.) An approach from the Llanidloes branch of the Amalgamated Society of Miners pleading for membership was turned down, (32) and there were also rumours that the A.S.M. were willing to accept the quarrymen. (33)

This was to be a union for North Wales Slate quarrymen and no attempt was made to recruit workers in other industries not even those in N. Wales' stone quarries.

The first early months of the new union's life witnessed a bitter struggle for survival. Representatives of the management of 19 quarries (34) in Caernarfonshire met in the Royal Hotel, Caernarfon and passed three resolutions, the first deploring the setting up of a union " which is certain to be injurious to both masters and men ", the second calling on " every quarry proprietor in North Wales.... to refuse to employ any man who is ascertained to be a member of the Union." and the third pledging them not to " take into their employ any quarryman or labourer coming from another quarry without a written certificate

from the manager or agent of the quarry he left ". (35)

A formidable anti-union programme.

In early June Mr. Wallace W. Cragg the manager of the Glynrhonwy Quarry refused work to 120 union members until they gave up their membership of that organisation but after a short two-week struggle he "fell from the land of dreams " and gave up the thought that

"fate had arranged for him to win the crown of

immortality and that he was the chosen hero to

strike down the quarrymen's union ". (36) Mr. Cragg, amazed by the men's determination to stick by their union withdrew his condition that only non-members could work his quarries. He passed on his hero's mantle to the heavier figures of Assheton-Smith and Lord Ponrhyn, for the Glynrhonwy dispute was only a prelude to the great battles that were looming in Dinorwic and Caebraichycafn.

As we have seen, Dinorwic had already witnessed some unrest in early 1874 and there were complaints also about the level of wages though they do not seem to have been too low - a first class quarryman could hope to earn £6. 10. 0. a month, a rybelwr £4. 10.0. (37)

A special grievance was the payment for those working a month's " fix "; that is doing essential though non-productive clearing work on their bargains, wages could then be as low as £2. a month. (38)

This was not the issue on which trouble broke, however. The subject was chosen by Assheton-Smith and his purpose was clear - to smash the Union. In the June bargain setting each crew was asked to choose between their union and their bargain. 2,200 men, all the quarrymen except 11, chose their union. The battle was not quite unexpected: 10 labourers had been dismissed in April in

an attempt to strike the union down in its infancy (39) and Assheton-Smith had visited the quarries himself the day before the setting to warn the men of what was coming. Their choice was not therefore an impulsive one nor was it a united collective action. Each crew was individually asked as the bargain-setter went from bargain to bargain, and the answer was invariably the same, most of the men having already collected their tools and prepared to leave before the agent approached. (40)

At a mass meeting soon afterwards the Vice President of the N.W.Q.U. and chairman of the Dinorwic lodge Robert Parry advised the men to adopt "firmness and moderation as their motto". (41) 2,200 ^{men} were locked out and 300 remained in the quarry "exclusively composed of old and infirm men, a few blacksmiths, stone cutters, joiners &c", (42) a pattern that was to be repeated more than once during the coming decades. Many of the locked-out men found work in other quarrying areas but funds soon became necessary and on June 22 the Llanberis lodge issued "an appeal for funds on behalf of the locked-out quarrymen of Llanberis... an appeal not only to our fellow quarrymen at home and in America, but also to the whole of the working men of England and Wales, as well as to every man that loves liberty and fair play". (43)

Early in July a scheme for arbitration was worked out with the involvement of Rev. D.O. Davies, vicar of Llandinorwic (44) and, more significantly, of John Robinson the Liberal owner of the Talysarn Quarry in Nantlle. An agreement was not immediately forthcoming however and there was some disagreement about the status of the men's deputations sent to Smith, the men refusing to

change their representatives at his request. An attempt was also made to set up a "company union" through a Dr. Davies who offered to finance a union for the Llanberis men alone; a suggestion that was rejected by a mass meeting of 4,000 at Pen y Llyn. (45)

By the 17th of July an agreement had, however, been reached the men having agreed to modify somewhat the rules of the Union in order to meet Smith's fear of "outsiders", presumably Radical tradesmen, interfering in his industrial relations. When the men went back to work their Rule Book read:

1. The object of the Union is to secure fair wages to each member according to his merit.
2. That the management of the Union is to be in the hands of a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, four delegates and a representative from each branch of the society.
3. That the payments are to be made as follows:
Every member 16 years of age and upwards 1/- per month for the first 3 months, 6d per month after the first three months. To those under 16, 6d. per month for the first 3 months and 3d. per month after the first three months.
4. That the head office is to be in Caernarfon, at which place all payments must be made before the 20th of each month.
5. That the funds of the Union are to be under the control of the committee towards carrying out Rule 1, and also under special circumstances to be used to assist members to emigrate, and that a balance sheet be published yearly.

- is
6. That no-one to receive any assistance in money from the funds of the Union for the first twelve months of membership.
 7. That the President, Vice President, delegates and the committee be chosen by the members of the Union annually and by ballot.
 8. That the President, Vice President and all other officers of the Union except the Secretary shall be quarrymen or persons engaged in or connected with quarries.
 9. That the officers of the Llanberis and Dinorwic branch of the Union shall consist only of quarrymen and shall not be subject to the interference of the General Committee so far as relates to the management of the Llanberis and Dinorwic quarries.
 10. That this Union has no intention to interfere with the managers, agents or working of the quarries, or with any rights of the proprietors.
 11. That any workman who will not have joined the Union is not to be molested on that account.
 12. That no further rules are to be adopted without giving notice thereof to the quarry owners, and in the event of their objecting thereto, the subject is to be referred to an umpire chosen by both sides. (46)

This was signed by the Dinorwic lodge executive and it is not clear whether it was intended to apply to the Union as a whole or only to the local branch. Smith's pressure is obvious on Rules 10, 11, and 12 and rule 12 especially was an important concession to make, conceding in fact one of the fundamental claims of any trade union -

the right to manage its own house in its own way with no interference from employers. There is no evidence however that the rule was ever exercised either in Dinorwic or anywhere else despite the N.W.Q.U's several changes in rules. Rule 11 was also to be dramatically ignored. And so despite Rule 12 the outcome of the Dinorwic Lock-Out can only be seen as a victory, however much qualified, for the men. Smith had certainly failed in his attempt to curb the union and break the men's attachment to their organisation.

The second branch of the Union had meanwhile been established in the Penrhyn Quarries adopting a constitution of four officers and a general committee of two or three representatives from each ponc or gallery of the quarry; the original committee consisted of 53 men and the chairman, as in Dinorwic, was a Robert Parry. (47) At a meeting on July 20th 1874 the committee decided to put in a claim for an advance in wages, (48) a claim that seems to have been well justified for though, Robert Parry claimed, Lord Penrhyn had in 1865

" promised to guarantee a pay of a guinea per week to all able and industrious quarrymen, yet hundreds of the best quarrymen have been receiving less than three pounds a month for a very long time... and the general rule in the work is that no-one shall receive more than five pounds for a month's work although their legitimate earnings on their bargains may be seven or eight pounds ". (49)

In other words, despite their reluctance to admit of any possible standardisation principle in the bargaining system and their refusal to introduce a defined norm as a basis for the system, the management had nevertheless

themselves introduced a maximum level of wages which need not bear any real relation to the quantity of slate produced or of the work involved. This grievance was intensified by the fact that the making price of slate had been set " when the slate trade was comparatively in its infancy ". (50) and still stood in 1874 for slates of 24" x 12" at 25/- per 1,000 (a 1,000 in the slate quarries was really 1,266); they were selling at the same time for £10 per thousand.

The next night, on July 21st the committee, fearful of the consequences of their complaints and claims, and with no doubt the memory of the dismissed men of 1870 in their minds, decided to circulate a Bond among the men which would bind the signator to defend his representatives on the committee as well as the officials of the Lodge and also " those collecting to help the Llanberis union branch ". (51) Any man who broke his word would have to pay £1 (52) and all those except t old men who refused to sign had their names taken. (53)

The men demanded a " standard " of wages for Quarrymen of 30/- a week

" when they are unable to do it on the contract and allowed what they can do over and above this", they also demanded 27/- a week standard for bad-rock quarrymen " punt y bunt ", a pound for every pound's worth of slates for the rybelwrs, and at least 15/- a week for journeymen (54) (the last demand being a claim against themselves, as the crews of skilled quarrymen themselves employed the journeymen).

This agitation for higher wages coincided with the Dinorwic Lock-Out and its aftermath, with the Penrhyn Lodge's attempts to assist financially their locked

out brothers on the other side of the amountain, and with the employers' determined attempt to break the union. Mr. William Cragg and Duff Assheton-Smith had done their bit and failed, now it was up to Lord Penrhyn, the biggest, the richest and the most ruthless of the quarry owners. On July 14th he issued an order that no more funds were to be collected for the purpose of assisting the Dinorwic Lodge on threat of closing the quarry. This action brought a flood of support to the Union Lodge in Bethesda and 2,300 men joined. Their demands unmet and the situation inflamed by the union issue, on July 30th, the union lodge committee ordered that

" the workmen are not to continue at their work until we come to an undertaking with our employer and that no workman who is responsible to the committee is to go to his work on any account except those who have not completed their month's work ". (55)

Virtually everyone complied and the quarry stopped. Given the greater wealth and power of the owner the Penrhyn strike of 1874 was a more drawn out and bitter affair which caught public attention. Fund raisers toured far and wide (56) and by October, 1,800 men had left the district to seek work elsewhere. There were some unpleasant scenes and stones were thrown at the few quarrymen who drifted back to work. In mid-September in fact a " chief constable and a host of police with a sackful of cutlasses " arrived in Bethesda but their services were hardly required.

On the 4th August the men presented their full demands to the Penrhyn estate agent Mr. Pennant Lloyd having earlier failed to elicit any response from

Lord Penrhyn himself and unwilling to go to the quarry management. They had by this time reconsidered some of their earlier demands. (57)

They received no reply to these demands until the 21st of the month when Lord Penrhyn made it clear that he was turning down most of the demands but that he would increase the price for making slates, thus bringing up the quarrymen's wages. The committee replied by pointing out that though this concession was generous it really didn't amount to much if the management persisted in its policies - wages could still be kept low despite the rise in prices by the agent merely cutting the poundage. The committee stated that "owing to our distrust of the management we are compelled to decline the offer as it now stands". (58) This remained the crux of the prolonged negotiations by letter which followed though other important questions also came to be involved - had wages risen or fallen since 1865 ? would Lord Penrhyn take back into the quarry those sacked in 1870 ? etc.

On August 26th the committee informed Penrhyn that as no progress was being made

"we have decided as a body of workmen to remove our tools from the quarry tomorrow morning and seek for work elsewhere, although by doing this we shall be breaking up our homes". (59)

This was the ultimate threat. To face a strike was one thing but to actually lose to other districts highly skilled men who could not be replaced for a generation was a crippling blow.

We have seen earlier (60) how the dispute then

became increasingly involved with the role of management and how, when the men returned to work on September 17th they found the management policies unchanged and therefore walked out again. The matter, after some discussion was finally resolved by three arbiters.

The arbiters, Mr. Wyatt representing Lord Penrhyn, Mr. E. W. Mathew for the men and Mr. John Thomas, Caernarfon as independent secretary, sat through the last weeks of October and gave their verdict on the 4th November: of 19 cases of the managers breaking the P.L. agreement submitted by the men 17 were upheld, and 1 was found against the men (the other contained a clerical error.) (61)

A mass meeting the next day decided that they would "return to our work under the arrangement come to with Mr. Pennant Lloyd, and to take the lettings from others than the present managers ".

The three managers, J. Francis, R. Morris and O. P. Jones, resigned and the manager of the Dorothea Quarry, Nantlle appointed in their place.

The men had thus won all they had asked for, a guaranteed minimum " standard " of wages AND the downfall of the management clique that had dominated the Quarry for 50 years. And in the committee established to vet claims under the agreement lay a powerful body which, recognised or not, had a central role to play for the next 30 years. Penrhyn had set out with his ban on union collections to smash the union, he had ended up with this.

The union's first year was therefore an eventful one; it was also successful, not only in terms of

winning crucial battles against the two most powerful Quarry owners but also in the more mundane work of winning recruits and establishing branches. By the time the Union held its first conference in May 1875 there (62) were ten established branches.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Lodge No. 1. | Dinorwic. |
| 2. | Caebraichycafn. |
| 3. | Ffestiniog. |
| 4. | Nantlle. |
| 5. | Corris and Abergynolwyn. |
| 6. | Llanberis (catering for the Quarries
other than Dinorwic in the Llanberis
area); |
| 7. | Ports Bangor and Dinorwic. |
| 8. | Bethesda (for quarries other than
Penrhyn); |
| 9 and 10. | Moeltryfan and Waenfawr. |

there were thus Lodges in virtually all the quarrying areas and other than Lodges 1 and 2 they were all geographically based with members drawn from several quarries in their locality.

In order to spread their influence, in December 1874 the Union had had published 9,000 Rules in Welsh, 1,000 in English. (63)

Membership had also grown steadily. By 20th July 1874 the union had 4,843 members, almost all at Dinorwic and Penrhyn, by the end of October, as the union spread to other areas the number had grown to 5,700, three months later it was up another thousand to 6,756 and by the time of the conference in May it had reached 7,196. Dinorwic and Penrhyn were by far the biggest branches contributing two thirds of the total subscriptions for

the year and both sending four delegates to the conference. Both Ffestiniog and Nantlle also seem to have established sound branches, Ffestiniog being the bigger, and both sent two delegates to the conference. The other Lodges were (64) considerably smaller and had only one delegate between them.

A sign of the success of the union was the debate during the first conference on what was to be done with the union funds so far collected. There was over £1,500 in hand and after some discussion on the difficulties of obtaining securities for sinking the money in an emigration scheme it was decided to let the executive committee invest the money as they saw fit. The committee was well qualified for such a financial decision as the officers of the union were to remain unchanged for another year with John Lloyd Jones, Quarry owner as President; Robert Parry, Llanrug, quarryman as Vice President, David Thomas a Ffestiniog surgeon, as general Treasurer, and W.J. Parry accountant and merchant as General Secretary.

In their first report to the union the President and General Secretary warned against complacency, especially on the question of regular paying of dues, "it is of the greatest importance", they pointed out "that the payments should be kept up regularly every month by the members". The question attracted some debate at the conference for it was felt that new members

should not be allowed to benefit from the sacrifices of longer standing members without making some extra contribution. Subscriptions for the first year had been set at 6d a month, for new members they were now to go up to 1/- a month for the first six months and 6d a month thereafter. This rise was not welcomed by some of the delegates from Merionethshire and it was feared that such a move " might cripple the action of the union " in those areas where recruitment had only just begun. The regularity of monthly payments obviously left much to be desired, in November 1875, for example only 6,644 men had paid their dues. (65)

The rise in subs for new members might also have had the result that some had feared at the ¹⁸75 conference. For while membership rose somewhat during the year - it was up to 7,460 by the Second Annual Conference in May 1876 , (66) an increase of 264 - little new ground seems to have been broken and the Ffestiniog Lodge, small in relation to the total number of quarrymen in the area and thus a Lodge which should have grown during 1875, in fact witnessed a falling off in membership. (67) The 1876 conference however reaccepted the level of subscriptions for new members.

1875 - 6 did not witness the same rapid growth as 1874 as the recruitment which could have been expected in Merionethshire did not take place. In the existing branches of Caernarfonshire however the Union consolidated its position adding slightly to the membership and, more important, setting up the Lodges on a more sound basis than before. " Exceptional Payments " were made in this work which seems to have paid off for, by the conference of May 1876, every Lodge was organised enough at least

to be represented by a delegate.

Financially too the union had consolidated its position with more than £3,000 in hand, £1,936 in stocks and £1,158 in the bank.. With the union in such a prosperous state W.J.Parrry decided to resign his position as General Secretary feeling that as far as the union was concerned "his endeavours were successful to a great degree". "Circumstances connected with business affairs called him away" but his heart, he promised, would continue to be on the side of the quarrymen. (68) He was to make other, similar farewells in the future. The new General Secretary was not elected until a special conference convened a month later in June when W.J.Williams won the job. Williams, a schoolteacher from Bethel who later became an accountant, was to hold the post until he was removed following the 1896 - 7 Penrhyn Lock-out. The other officers of the union remained as before.

1876 - 7 witnessed the same tendencies of consolidation in Caernarfonshire and lack of success in Merionethshire which had become apparent earlier. By the third Annual Conference of the Union held in Bethesda in May 1877 membership had again increased somewhat - by 275 to 7,735 but the growth in Merionethshire had been disappointing.)69) Back again as the new President of the Union, W.J.Parrry sorrowed that

" the condition of the union at present was not what it ought to be ". (70)

For while the situation at Penrhyn and Dinorwic was quite heartening the situation elsewhere was not so promising.

One reason for this was the lack of a union benefits scheme.

The question had been raised in October 1875 and in 1877 a "Scheme of Relief for Old and Disabled Members" was proposed by the Secretary W.J. Williams, (71) 6d per member per quarter would, he thought, be sufficient to give 3/- a week to old and disabled members (he calculated that some 448 members were over 60.)

The scheme got a mixed reception, J.O. Griffith (better known under his Bardic name Ioan Arfon) considered that

" it ran contrary to the functions of the Union.

The object of the Union's formation was to protect the quarrymen while at their work, and not to support those of them unable to work ". (72)

It was also pointed out that " very few quarrymen reach old-age." A decision on the scheme was postponed until the Lodges had time to discuss it; this was to be the first of many such postponements.

The slow but steady growth of the union does, however, seem to have allayed fears on the question of subscriptions and the 1877 conference felt confident enough to raise them to 1/- a month for all members and to lower the 'fine' for failure to pay from a 1/- for 3 months owing, down to 6d. Assets in May 1877 in fact stood at £4,793, a sum which could give some comfort to the quarrymen. (73)

This progress continued throughout 1877 and early 1878 and by the Fourth Annual Conference held in Penygroes in May 1878 the membership had finally topped the 8,000 mark at 8,295; (74) a new Lodge, the eleventh had been set up for Rhos and Dolwyddelan and the union funds had " increased to the handsome sum of £6,977 ". Satisfaction was expressed in the Yearly Report with the improvement in the regularity of dues payments and also with the growth at last in the Ffestiniog branch. W.J. Parry was re-elected President and W.J. Williams General Secretary, the union seemed on solid enough ground and all felt well satisfied. In his Presidential address however Parry was not over optimistic and he pointed to the coming depression in the trade which at the time was only just beginning, " it would be well ", he warned, " for them in case a reduction in wages took place to act reasonably ". The trade, he pointed out, was " always fluctuating " and it would be as well to be prepared. In fact the peak of the slate industry had passed and the eighties were to see a prolonged depression finally bringing to an end the slate industry's long expansionist phase. (75) The Union was not in fact, in our period, ever to have as many members as it had in May 1878.

The first four years of the union were easily its most successful not only in terms of membership and funds but also in the success they had in facing the masters.

It was not only on the wages front that the union were successful for they also took up the question of working hours. It was a question of some importance to the quarrymen, especially so as they often had to walk miles over stony mountain paths to get to their work.

Robert Parry, the union's Vice President declared to the delegates' loud applause that he

" wished to suggest to their employers that

the time be reduced to nine hours a day ". (76)

A year later it was reported that the hours question in one of the districts (probably Dinorwic) had been settled. (77)

Working hours in fact varied from district to district, the shortest being, in March 1876, in Llanberis; the men worked 10 hours in Bethesda and Nantlle, $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours in Corris and 11 in Ffestiniog. (78) The longer hours in Ffestiniog were partly explained by the underground method of working which was not necessarily limited by daylight and were the obvious target for any move to shorter hours, particularly as this could demonstrate the value of union to the unenthusiastic Ffestiniog men.

The local lodge were however slow in launching any campaign and the first battles on the hours question took place elsewhere. In April 1876 the men of Penyrorsedd in the Nantlle Valley struck for shorter hours, (79) The question might have come to a head here because of the unemployment of Penyrorsedd men - in 1864 the quarry had employed 400 men but by 1871 this was down to 40 (80) which would have encouraged any feeling of being overworked. It is not clear how many men were involved (by 1882 the quarry was employing 261 men) but there were 55 union members who received strike pay. The strike lasted two weeks and the union considered that the

" dispute was settled to the satisfaction of both employers and employed ". (81)

In July 1877 the Ffestiniog Lodge started to move on the question as well (82) and in September the Council of the Union passed that the hours of labour " are unreasonably long in Ffestiniog as at present " and they promised to

" undertake to do everything within their powers and limitations with the managers, the owners, and the Government, to shorten the hours to what they are in other districts in North Wales ". (83)

Unfortunately we have no record of the success or otherwise of this campaign though the growth of the Ffestiniog branch at this time suggests at least that it was not a failure.

There were other disputes which involved the union during these years but they were mostly quite minor, a matter cropped up at the Welsh Slate Co. Rhiw in January, February 1875, (84) and there was a "disagreement" at Pantdreiniog Quarry in Bethesda in December, 1876, (85) there was also a short strike at Cwmeiddew, Corris in May 1877 (86) and in December 1877 a serious dispute broke out at the Rhos Quarry in Capel Curig. In Rhos a small quarry came under new ownership, the management tried to introduce new rules which the union felt to be

" destructive of the principle of contract "

Unless the new rules were repealed the union called on the men to

" refuse to work under them and we shall do our part in offering you all assistance ". (87)

The men came out and stayed out. In June 1878, 28 men were receiving strike pay, (88) and two years later in May 1880 the union was still paying out when the union was informed that the men could no longer be on strike as the quarry had closed down as a result of the depression. (89) 13 men were then still in receipt of strike benefit. The dispute involved very few men but as shown by its length it was accorded some importance by the union and it cost more than £1,100 to keep going.

This was because of the threat posed to the contract system.

In Rhos the union Council (as opposed to the local lodge) for the first and only time in our period called its members out.

The North Wales Quarryman's Union had been established in time to enjoy the height of the boom in the slate industry, and it benefitted considerably from those years.

Success was not complete however, not only was there room for great improvements in wages and conditions but, more ominously, the union had failed to win the allegiance of anything like all the quarrymen of the reign.

As the depression set in in 1878 - 9 therefore the young union had still to prove itself to many quarrymen. Allegiances made during the relatively easy days of the boom were now to be severely tested.

2. DEPRESSION..

The depression foreseen by the May 1878 conference had bitten hard by January 1879.

By August 1878 union membership was down to 6,776 (90) as owners cut wages and drastically reduced their labour costs.

Faced with this situation the union replied with "forebearance" and an emigration scheme.. - W.J. Parry

advised the men to " Be Respectful to their Superiors " as well as " Faithfull to Each Other " and the union took a strict line with those who took matters into their own hands and struck without union assent. Relative calm prevailed but a wave of strikes did hit the quarries during 1878 as they attempted to maintain their wage standards.

1878, in fact witnessed more strikes than all the years since the union's foundation combined. The strikes affected however only the smaller quarries and left the major centres untouched, they therefore passed unreported and little commented on. The immediate issues at stake in most remain unknown as do their results. The strike example cannot, however have been too successful for the following year, 1879, witnessed only two fresh disputes. (91) And by the 1880 Conference, despite four strikes in the early months of 1880, Robert Parry, Llanrug, the new President of the union could credibly complement his members, for

" the great virtue of forbearance had been signally manifested on the part of the quarrymen...

'forbearance' not in the sense it was used

towards slaves but forbearance arising out of

sincere submission to circumstances and things ". (92)

In the face of the depression the union was in no position to put up a fight and afraid of seeing its funds spent on bitter and unwinnable strikes they counselled submission. In this way, they hoped, they could win the scarce but precious 'respect' of the masters and thus salvage something from a sorry period. (93) In the areas of

union strength and discipline this advice carried the day but amongst those with less reason to accept its not immediately clear reasoning withdrawal of labour seemed the obvious response. Thus it was in the smaller quarries that disputes broke and in at least one case, the strike at Braich Goch in Corris, the union members were " led by the non-members to strike ". (94)

Emigration was the union's response to the situation. It was not a new policy and an emigration scheme had been one of the planks of the union's founding. It was only now that it was taken seriously. In December the union council recommended members to emigrate, and promised to do all in their power to help. With some urgency a comprehensive scheme was drawn out and passed by the January 1879 Council; (95) it laid down that each emigrating Union member be paid £3 for his first year of membership and £1 for each following year. Those going to Chicago or further West or South received an extra £2 and those venturing to the Southern hemisphere were to get double. Emigrants were to sign a bond and pay back the money without interest, those taking their wives received half as much again.

It was hoped that at least some of the emigrating men would be able to find work in the American slate quarries of Pennsylvania, New York State and Vermont and W.J. Parry embarked in 1879 on a trip to the U.S.A. to survey the possibilities in these areas. His report was (96) not encouraging as he found low wages and lack of work wherever he went and warned that " there is here no proper place at present either for common labourers or quarrymen to emigrate "; even more alarming, he found that " the Welsh were rapidly losing their hold ". Welsh influence

had been strong in American quarries, one of the main centres in Pennsylvania was called Bangor, and many quarries carried names associating them with Wales; there was Welshtown in the district of Slatington, Penn. and many quarries were named after their Welsh owners, " Mesach Roberts ", and " Jones, Roberts and Parry ", for example; others had Welsh names, Arvon, Penrhyn, Snowdon etc. But such influences were on the wane, Welsh quarrymen seem to have drifted away from the quarries and new nationalities had learnt their craft. It must therefore have been with some dismay that the members of the Union considering emigration read that out of the 200 workmen in the Chapman quarry, the biggest in the U.S.A, only a mere 20 were Welsh the others being Dutchmen, Irishmen and Cornishmen. The skill of the splitter, however, was still exclusively in Welsh hands though under the American system of working splitters were not as numerous as in Wales and even in this preserve, Parry noted , " the hole which Welshmen have is only a question of time " .

Emigration was, ne vertheless, central to Union policy and in April 1879 the Union Council felt that " emigration is our only salvation " (197) and during the year 143 men took the Union's money and emigrated. Such a number was not insignificant especially considering that there were other emigration agencies than the Union and most quarrymen leaving their homes went to the nearby centre of Liverpool, not to embark from its docks but to seek work there. It is difficult, however to see how such a number could have in any major way eased the situation for other Union members in the quarries. The union's emigration policy seems to have

been an encouragement to a trend which the state of the industry was itself enforcing rather than a significant element in that trend.

As the 80s progressed it became increasingly clear that the depression affecting the slate industry was different from any previous downturn: it had bit deeper, and it was lasting considerably longer. To men who had experienced a continuous expansion in their industry for most, if not all, of their working lives it was a situation difficult to adjust to. The union stuck to its strategy of wait and see and prophesied year after year that things would soon get better. The annual report of the officers for 1881 claimed that "trade is reviving slowly and is likely to improve gradually and all we require is patience to wait," in 1882 they reported that "things are improving a little in most of the quarries"; the hope came to be voiced annually. But the continuing depression, continuing despite an upturn in the economic condition of the country generally, called forth criticisms of the economic management of the industry.

The union blamed the crisis on the lack of co-operation amongst the quarry owners, most disturbingly displayed by the cut-throat undercutting of prices as the masters squabbled for a share of the market. (98) In this criticism they had the support of many of the smaller quarry owners some of whom were themselves of Liberal persuasion and friendly toward the union. The union also accused the masters of a lack of drive, of failing to build up new export markets in the colonies and elsewhere.

But these criticisms could not add up to a strategy

for there was very little that the Union could itself do to change the method of running the industry. Conscious of this they decided to themselves buy and run a quarry. The idea of such a co-operative slate quarry was not altogether new, it had been raised by a visiting speaker, a Mr. William Lester of Wrexham at the Union's Second Annual Conference in 1876 and Robert Parry had declared himself to be in favour of such a scheme in May 1880. (99) The 1882 Conference voted £1,000 for the launching of the venture and a small quarry was purchased in Rhyd-Ddu. And W.J. Williams toured the lodges in August 1880 " to explain the object of the North Wales Unionists Quarries Co ". (100)

Apart from this co-operative experiment impelled by the feeling that, " if other people can make money by working quarries, why ca not the Union - the quarrymen themselves - do likewise ". (101) emigration remained the main strand of central union policy and the efficiency of the scheme was coming to be increasingly criticised.

As early as September 1879 some of the difficult social consequences of emigration were becoming apparent and the Union Council decided not to support emigrants who left their families behind unprovided for. (102) In January 1880, as the cost of subsidised emigration was becoming more apparent the allowance was cut in to half the previous level. (103) By May 1880 the Union had paid out almost £700 (104) to help 143 (105) members emigrate, a cost which seemed high in relation to the benefit. With less money available and perhaps with the hope of conditions brightening at home emigration in 1880 was low with only 29 Union (106) members leaving at a cost of £67. (107) As it became clear, however,

that the depression was not lifting, mid-1881 witnessed
a higher level of emigration and some 86⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ members left at
a cost of £414 (109) before the fund was closed by
the union council in November 1881.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ It had become
clear that the cost of the venture to the union was very
high and rumours of the misuse of the funds, of quarrymen
being subsidised for journeys to the United States
pretending to be emigrating but in fact only visiting
relatives and then returning, (111) convinced the council
and the Conference of 1882 that no more money should be
paid out until a better scheme could be worked out.
This was not a rejection of emigration as a policy
only a reaction to its cost to the union.

The logic of emigration still remained with
unemployment threatening the quarries and the population
of the quarry districts steadily increasing. In April
1883 the union council discussed the possibility of
buying land in the United States (112) and at the
Conference the next month three lodges, Ffestiniog,
Nantlle and Alexandria called for union assistance to
emigrating members. The conference discussed the
suggestion to purchase American land, a scheme strongly
supported by W.J. Parry, (113) and entrusted the executive
council with up to £2,000 for such a venture.

The idea was that the Union would buy a piece of
land in the quarrying areas of the United States which
would then be divided up into farms and sold to emigrating
members who would pay in installments and without
interest. (114) To ensure that such a scheme would not
develop out of the control of the Union a lodge was to be
formed there which would defend the emigrants' and the
union's interests. It was an ambitious plan meant, in

effect, to set up a colony of Welsh speaking ex-quarrymen.

It seems, however, that the American authorities were not keen to allow a trade union to buy land for the purpose of settlement (115) and the plan came to nothing. At the Annual Conference of May 1884 W.J. Williams, the General Secretary, proposed that a new approach be made to the U.S. Government this time in conjunction with Welsh farmers wishing to participate in a Welsh settlement. (116) But the Conference rejected any further moves along these lines and though the Ffestiniog lodge was still wishing to see an emigration scheme of some sort others raised their voices in opposition to the whole idea of emigration as a strategy for the union.

A. Mr . W.R. Jones of Dinorwic moved a motion, which the conference seemed to approve of, opposing any further union subsidy for emigration on the grounds that

" it would be better to help the members at home than to help them to emigrate ". (117)

The issue was not dead, however, and a news paper report (118) of 1884 named emigration as the main point of discussion among quarrymen. The reason for this, they explained, was the widespread unemployment, and the fact that the population of the quarrying districts was increasing by 20% while the quarries were only increasing by 5% (it seems very doubtful whether the quarries were expanding at all at this time, they certainly were not by 5%). In September 1884 the Union Council was presented with a new plan, probably the brainchild of W.J. Williams, to set up a " Cymdeithas Ymfudol Cyffredinol Gogledd Cymru " which would be a general emigrating body catering for the demand from non-union as well as union members. (119) The plan was rejected by the lodges in

November 1884. (120)

Despite the failure of Union-sponsored emigration it remained a solution for many quarrymen; it was reported in May 1885 for example that two groups of Penrhyn quarrymen, each 50 strong, had set sail for Tasmania. (121) The union dropped its own scheme but in May 1886 sent a deputation to the Colonial Secretary to lobby for Government sponsored colonial settlement. (122) Emigration for the quarrymen, as for generations of Welsh tenant farmers, and as later for the tin plate workers of South Wales, was a pressing possibility.

Though emigration seemed to be the union's only real answer to the depression, in the quarries and the localities other policies were also being pursued. The still unresolved question of long working hours in Ffestiniog now became of even greater import as men worked inordinately long hours while fellow quarrymen were without work of any kind. In early March 1882 a mass meeting of all Ffestiniog quarrymen was called to press for a shortening of hours. (123) The response was enthusiastic and a committee representing twelve quarries was elected by a meeting of almost 3,000 quarrymen. The committee negotiated with the masters and won some concessions but their recommendations were rejected by a second mass meeting the next week which decided to call for a 7.a.m. start, half an hour, or if possible an hour, for lunch and an end to the working day at 5.p.m. (124) There then followed a series of mass meeting and demonstrations but the masters remained adamant. In July there was talk of strike action but the Union advised against it and finally, (125) in August 1882, after

6 months of continuous pressure, the Welsh Slate Co. conceded much of the men's case by accepting a 7.30.a.m. start, an hour's break for lunch from 12 until 1 and an end to work at 5.30.p.m. on Mondays, a 6.30 start on Tuesdays to Fridays and work from 6.30 till twelve on Saturdays. (126)

The Oakeley and Llechwedd mines soon adopted this arrangement and the other quarries were not long in following their example. And as we have seen there was resistance also to redundancies in the Penrhyn Quarries. (127)

The shock of the depression had also brought a degree of craft protectionism expressing itself in the quarrymen's exploring of possible apprenticeship schemes.

What was needed was not a new form of training but a method of controlling entry into the quarries. A plan was discussed by the union council in November 1879 (128) but nothing seems to have come of it: the skilled men, however do seem to have experienced a growing consciousness of their status during these years and a speaker from Nantlle at the 1882 Conference complained bitterly that

" the craft at the present time is too open to all classes to come in..... every beast should be prevented from entering ". (129)

A sharp drop in membership was soon the depression's effect on the union. In January 1879 there had been 7704 members but by July there had been a drop of over 2,000 to 5,264; numbers grew slowly during the winter

and in May 1881 there were almost 6,000 members again, but the summer saw another slump down to 4,037 in August and there then followed a steadying out to 4,563 in January 1881. (130) Summer membership was always lower than the average for the rest of the year so normal seasonal factors as well as the general decline accelerated the sharp summer drop; nevertheless, between January 1879 and January 1881 the union had lost well over a third of its members. For the next three years there was a gradual decline, losing some 500 members per year, and by November 1883 membership reached a low point of 3,341.

The very fact of the depression, of wage cuts and unemployment, was of course a major reason for this decline but the behaviour of the union was also an important factor. The union council seemed quite bewildered by the crisis and unable to pursue their boom time pressure for higher wages they failed to develop any new policies.

We have already chartered the development of the emigration policy; ideas for benefit schemes suffered even more from procrastination. (131)

Counselling peace with the masters and restraint in everything, with no benefits to administer and with even the emigration fund cut off the union must have appeared quite moribund to those it was meant to appeal to.

Unable under the changed conditions to improve wages the union had very little left to offer its members. Only in Penrhyn and to a lesser extent in Dinorwic, where there existed a short but dramatic tradition of Union achievement, was membership for the ordinary quarryman very meaningful and these two branches quite overshadowed the rest; on the 1882 executive Committee of the union for example there were 5 delegates from the Bethesda area, four from the Llanberis area and only one each from Ffestiniog and Nantlle. (132) Even in Penrhyn where the union's Quarry Committee was negotiating with the management and actively defending the men's interests the Committee was having to make constant appeals to ensure regular payment of dues and to maintain the union's hold on the men, even going so far in January 1881 as to appoint

" two men to be with each book to interview those who do not pay ". (133)

a move that the future Lord Penrhyn was to interpret as intimidation.

In Blaenau Ffestiniog where the men had won their campaign on hours, the role of the union was not so straightforward for the pressure there, while involving the union, does not seem to have been under its direction. D.G. Williams the most active and prominent union figure in Ffestiniog had been effectively able to get a mass meeting to reject the original proposals of the negotiating committee and to get his own proposals accepted, (134) but he himself does not appear to have been a member of the committee which does not appear to have had any direct connection with the union. The success of this campaign, not identified with the union, could

therefore have had the effect of reinforcing the belief that the union as such had very little to offer. The same may be said for the several strikes in smaller quarries which broke out during these years and in which union members were a minority, unable to control or influence events.

The reluctance of the union conference to adopt some of the proposals put to it and its failure to initiate new policies means that the blame for the central union's lethargy cannot be all placed on the leading officers. Nevertheless, the union during this period suffered severely from the lack of an energetic leadership. W.J. Parry, spent much of 1879 in the United States and was re-elected in the Conference of that year in his absence. He resigned before completing his term of office and in the 1880 Conference Robert Parry, who had been the union's vice-president was elected President. The Conference regretted Parry's resignation but also felt that the time had come for the union to find its officers from amongst its own members; as John Evans of Hen Caellwyngrydd said when proposing Robert Parry for the Presidency, their President should be one of themselves (135) and Robert Parry was one of the few founder members of the union who was also a working quarryman. Robert Parry was a relatively young man, he was 39 in 1880, but his words were always weighed with caution; deliberate, wary and grave he was a

" philosopher... and a faithful and hard working deacon ", (136) from the scattered smallholding area of Ceunant, and while he was much respected his over-cautious approach was not best suited to a period of

rapid transition in the union's and in the industry's fortunes. Elected with him as Vice President was another working quarryman, the other Robert Parry. The Vice President seems to have been very much of the same mould as his namesake and when Robert Parry, the President (always known as Robert Parry, Ceunant, Llanrug) died in 1884 he also fell from office.

In effective control of the union at this time was the General Secretary W.J. Williams who was re-elected by successive Conferences. It was Williams' administrative ability which kept the union running relatively smoothly but as subsequent events were to show he was an unimaginative and uncommitted man. (137)

This leadership developed no new strategy but by and large fell back on to the traditional pre-unionisation answer of the quarrymen to bad times - emigration. (138)

In any confrontations with the quarry owners they counselled peace and patience.

While the union was thus quiescent the quarry owners were preparing their offensive for the depression was forcing on them not merely the need to cut wages but also

the awareness of the need to cut down in a more permanent fashion their labour costs and to employ their labour more efficiently and productively. To achieve this it was necessary to assault the independent work style of the quarryman and to undermine the bargain wages system. The first shot in the attempt to achieve the former was fired in Penrhyn as early as January 1878 when a new code of rules governing working hours and holidays was introduced. (139) The code was designed to prevent disruption of production by irregular working and aimed to limit "extra" holidays to 6 days a year, and to enforce regular time keeping. It appears that the Committee at first accepted the new rules which included fines for late comers to work but that the mass of quarrymen refused to work under them. After further negotiations the Committee accepted a resolution from one of the galleries which opposed not only the particular code in question but all rules. The resolution read,

" After careful consideration we are thoroughly convinced that it is impossible to carry on under uniform rules works so large and varying so much in circumstances. It appears to us that a Rule

which in some cases would be advantageous to the Master and the workman might in other cases prove very detrimental to the one and the other. We are extremely anxious to see right order continuing through fair management as we believe that our freedom as workmen is inseparably connected with that but in a case of discipline we think the general character of the offender ought to be taken into consideration which is not done by a rule. We have been brought to understand that the 'special holidays' have opened the door for the introduction of the Rules and in order to remove everything which tends in the slightest degree to endanger the mutual understanding and the good feeling which exist between us we are willing to drop the subject of the 'special Holyday' hoping you will see your way clear not to press rules upon us ". (140)

Realising perhaps that this was an issue on which the men were not going to give in without a fight Lord Penrhyn dropped his new rules in exchange for a few minor concessions on when the men were to hand in their accounts of slates. (141) The objection voiced by the men to any rules was to be heard continuously in many quarries during the coming two decades; any rules were, they considered, bound to be impracticable and unfair. Despite the failure of this attempt to impose regular working Penrhyn did not give up his attempts to reduce labour costs.

In May 1879 the Quarry Committee decided for the first time to look at an issue which was to preoccupy them for twenty years, to " investigate the case of those who have taken 'contracts' ". (142) Though a bargain was, in a sense a contract, the form of contract which had now

come to the committee's notice was quite different and posed a real threat to the bargain system. The main features of this new contract system have already been discussed.

In March 1881, by which time there were 26 contracts in the Penrhyn Quarry, 23 galleries voted to condemn the system (143) but nothing seems to have been done about it and two years later the William Owen gallery passed a motion condemning the Committee for failing to tackle the issue. (144) It is not clear why the Committee was not more aware of the dangers of the system, they do not seem to have taken it up with the management at all; like the leadership of the union they probably felt that the depths of a depression was not the time to push on such an important and explosive issue; that at any rate was the reason they offered in April 1883 for they were then afraid of

" raising an unnecessary row especially when the market is as weak as it is ". (145)

The next month there was just such a row, among the men when Robert Jones, Rachub, a quarryman working under a contractor was elected chairman of the Committee;

Six galleries took strong objection to this election. (146)

and though the row quietened down quite quickly there was obviously a strong body of opinion in the quarry irreconcilably opposed to the contract system and all who worked it. (147)

As we have already seen the contract system was a major policy of the employers' offensive of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, so was the attempt to introduce stringent working rules. It was with sadness and resignation that the Union's Annual Report for 1879 - 80 talked of

" different changes which occurred in the quarries, some of which changes we consider impracticable and inimical to the benefit of both master and workman ". (148)

The story was the same in the report for the following year presented to the May 1881 Conference which noted the " sudden and unexpected changes... adopted by the masters " and advised the quarrymen to " meet all such changes quiet and cool ". (149) In Robert Parry's address to the same conference, however, a new steeliness edged into his remarks when he complained of the introduction of

" minute rules which had a tendency to tantalise the workman, and these must be carried out to the letter and imperatively ". His main complaint was that such rules inevitable led to corruption as quarrymen bribed officials for staying out of the " black book ". Such a system he warned would not be as calmly accepted as many wage cuts had been in the industry for,

" A working man should think that he had something to gain besides his mere wages. He had his own

self-respect and independence to look to, and when he was assailed on these points it was then he was to show that he was not going to be deprived of them either by fair promises or by threats ". (150)

For even in Penrhyn, despite the failure of introducing a new code, a tightening up of rules was being carried out by the management and chafing against this new strictness, three galleries in September 1884 complained of the " method of our managers of keeping our times and of refusing permission for an hour or two during inevitable circumstances ". (151) Some considerable flexibility remained, however, and the next month the manager " in accordance with the request of the Committee of the quarrymen ", granted " permission to trustworthy men to leave their work an hour before the time under special circumstances, and honestly repay such loss by working its equal in overtime " (152) though it was made clear that " permission for concerts and other public meetings would not be included in the above ". This meant, not that some men would be given permission on specific occasions but that they had a standing right to take such time off without seeking permission.

Robert Parry died, aged 43, in January 1884 and so left the Presidency of the Union once again vacant. The union by now had only 3630 members and the Annual Conference of 1884 (153) turned once again to W.J. Parry to try and lead them into a happier state. Two new

Vice Presidents were also elected, G.Griffith of Porthmadog and the energetic and able D.G.Williams of Tanymarian, Ffestiniog. There was even an unsuccessful attempt, the first of several, to unseat W.J.Williams from the General Secretaryship.

The new leadership initiated several developments: in June, the month following his election, Parry wrote and circulated around the quarry-masters a letter setting out the views of the union on the depressed state of the market. (154) the letter mentioned the union's oft-made criticism of the price-undercutting policies of the owners and urged them to come to an agreement on prices which might help to steady the market. The reaction was as expected: an encouraging reply from some of the smaller and more progressive masters and a reminder from others that the state of the market and the price of slates was a question for the owners and not for the union. Despite the fact, that the union was not invited to discuss the matter the occasion was used for the masters to hold a conference which agreed on some basic pricing policies, a development which the union could not have been too disappointed with. (155)

The union also made the first attempt to expand into forming new branches and in July 1884 (156) a campaign was initiated to try and establish a new branch in Cwm Penmachno, a quarrying area rather too far away from Ffestiniog to be able to fully participate in that lodge, a campaign which seems to have met with some success. A new benefit plan was also tackled by the union during this period though not with much success and the emigration scheme was half-heartedly revived. (157)

More significant was the lobbying practised by

the union for the first time over the issue of establishing an Inspectorate for the slate quarries. (158) As we have seen the open slate quarries at this time came under the terms of the Factory Acts but not of the Metalliferous Mines Regulation Acts which did, however, cover the slate mines, and despite the similarities in working conditions and dangers the open quarries were not, therefore, inspected as closely as the mines, an anomaly which the union now prepared to try and rectify. Their case was taken up by T. Love Jones-Parry now the M.P. for Caernarfon Boroughs. (159) This move signified a new approach to politics which was to become increasingly important in the Union's activities; politics was not any more to be studiously avoided but the union was to use all its pressure and influence to press in Parliament for particular demands with relevance to conditions in the industry.

This new departure was not only a response to political developments such as the 1884 Reform Act it was also an attempt to move forward at a time when the opportunities for industrial struggle were inauspicious: the union was weaker than it had ever been in its history and the masters' offensive was growing stronger by the day. A month before the 1885 conference, in April the quarrymen had suffered one of their most serious setbacks so far when the new Lord Penrhyn, taking over the management of the quarries from his father, declared that he was no

longer to recognise the Pennant Lloyd agreement nor the Quarry Committee (160) which was, he said a committee of the union members only and therefore unrepresentative of all his employees. The shock of this unilateral action and its implications took some time to register and the committee persisted in trying to negotiate about its own negotiating rights refusing to accept that they were no longer being recognised at all by the management.

The demand for an Inspector of Quarries was an attempt to intervene in this disadvantageous industrial situation through legislative means, in effect to shift the struggle from the near hopeless conditions of the quarries to the political plane; a political plane however which the union would involve itself in only insofar as it could thus directly influence matters in the quarries. For the demand for an Inspector of Quarries was conceived as one which, if granted in the form demanded, would substantially affect the power of managements. For the demand was not just

" to have anyone as an Inspector, but to have an experienced quarryman, one brought up in the craft, and learned in all matters relating to quarries ". (161)

such a man, it was confidently supposed by the union, would have a better understanding of the problems faced by working quarrymen than the inexperienced English gentlemen who managed so many of the quarries. The whole question of qualified managers was also one which Parry hoped could be settled through legislation which would insist on all managers passing an examination, an examination moreover " not in general knowledge but in practical knowledge of quarrying ", (162) for it

was a fundamental assumption of the quarrymen that anyone with a practical understanding of quarrying would see their point of view as opposed to any other. Political pressure for legislative changes concerning the industry was therefore to be central to the union's strategy from then on for, as Parry told the 1885 Conference,

" There are some serious shortcomings in relation to the managers and the quarries, which bear a close relation to your happiness and your lives, and which cannot be solved except through the interference of Parliament ". (163)

During 1884 Parry's new policies, or perhaps just the appearance of vigour in their execution, brought support for the union for the first time since 1878 . The year saw a growth in membership to 4,374 in April 1885, an increase of over 700 since January 1884.

The union was increasingly aware that a showdown was becoming daily more probable as the masters tightened discipline and lowered wages, and that an increased membership was necessary to face the future with any confidence; in March 1884 the union council appealed to their members to do all in their power to recruit more quarrymen,

" as nothing else will--enable us to successfully go through the attacks which are likely to meet us soon ". (164)

An explosion was narrowly averted in Penrhyn in April but the union suffered a major defeat there. There was a pressing consciousness that the masters were pushing the men to breaking point, that

" the day of judgement is not far. A foreign and threatening sound can be heard in the land.

Waters are gathering ". (165)

• They broke onto the Dinorwic Quarries in the summer of 1885.

The First Decade.1. Boom

1. Mining Journal, 21. 1. 1865. p 43.
2. In 1825 some 150 men struck work in the lower section of the Quarry and then "drove the rest off. The ostensible object of these ill-advised proceedings appears to be an advance in wages". (North Wales Gazette, 24. 3.. 1825) The adventure came to an abrupt end when the management took advantage of an indiscreet remark made by one of the men (advising the manager to jump in the lake) to blacken the aims of the struggle. See also, D. Dylan Pritchard, "A Threatened Revolt", QMJ
3. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 13. 5. 1865. p.5.
4. Of another sample of 46 crews one earned over £18 a month, 4 over £14, 26 over £9, 12 over £6 and 3 under £6. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 12. 8. 1865 p.7.
5. Explosives were a necessary expense for doing the job, the services of the carpenter and blacksmith (themselves employed by the quarry) were for maintenance and production of tools such as hammers, chisels, crowbars, measuring rods etc. The sick club contribution was an insurance against ill-health and accident while the coal was for domestic use and should not really have been included in a list of expenses except for the fact that the men always looked to the quarry for their

coal supply and so it became an item

built into the wages bill.

6. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 12. 8. 1865. p.7.

7. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 19. 8. 1865. p.5.

8. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 11. 11. 1865.

9. Parry claims 1800 joined.

10. W. J.. Parry, The Penrhyn Lock-Out, p.6.

" it was decided.... to establish a Trade

Union on the lines then existing in England,

and confine it to Penrhyn Quarry " (Parry p.5.)

12. Frank Price Jones, "Gwleidyddiaeth Sir

Gaernarfon yn y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Bymtheg ",

Caernarfonshire Historical Society Transactions

(1965) p. 94.

13. Y Faner. 21. 4 . 1869, quoted by

F. P.. Jones. op.. cit.

14. U.C. N.W. Mss. Penrhyn Estate Letter

Book, 28. 9. 1870..

15. Parry. op. cit., p.7.
16. Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald, 30. 7. 1870.
17. Coetmor 46. p.8. "Bethesda and its prospects"
by Vox Caban Coch, paper and date unknown.
18. F.Price Jones. op. cit.
19. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 20. 3. 1874.
20. ibid.
21. ibid., 3. 4. 1874. editorial.
22. ibid., 6. 3. 1874. p.6.
23. ibid.
24. ibid., 17. 4. 1874.
25. ibid., 24. 4. 1874.
26. ibid., 27. 3. 1874.
27. J.Roose Williams, Chapter 6.
28. see, for example, his letter in the Herald Cymraeg, 8, 15, 5. 1874. on policies to be followed by the Union..
29. Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald, 26. 9. 1874.
30. N.L.W. W.J.Parry Mss (4) 8736 C 2.6.1874.
31. ibid., 8. 8. 1874.
32. ibid., 30. 10. 1874.
33. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 12. 6. 1874; C. & D. Herald, 13. 7. 1874.
34. Penrhyn, Dinorwic, Glynrhonwy, Penybryn,
Cilgwyn, Dorothea, Cambrian, Coed Madog,
Talysarn Slate Co., Snowdon Slate Quarries,
Caernarfonshire Slate Co., Moeltryfan,
Port Bangor , Vron, Vronheulog, Braich,
Chwarel Fawr, Cloddfa'r Lon.
35. Parry., op. cit., pp 7 & 8.
36. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 12. 6. 1874.
37. ibid.

38. ibid.,
39. ibid., 1.5. 1874.
40. C & D Herald., 20. 6. 1874.
41. ibid., 27. 6. 1874.
42. ibid..
43. ibid.,
44. ibid., 4. 7. 1874.
45. ibid., 11. 7. 1874.
46. ibid., 18. 7. 1874.
47. Llyfr Penderfyniadau Perthynol, cangen Undeb
Chwarelwyr Gogledd Cymru Dosbarth Caebraichycaf n
1874. (W. J.. Parry MSS 8738B N.L.W.)
48. Parry 8738 B, 20. 7. 1874.
49. C & D Herald, 15. 8. 1874.
50. ibid.,
51. ibid., 21. 7. 1874.
52. ibid., 22. 7. 1874.
53. ibid., 24. 7. 1874.
54. ibid.,
55. ibid., 30. 7. 1874.
56. to London, Manchester, Liverpool and other
English towns as well as to towns and villages
throughout North Wales and to the South Wales
coalfield (C & D Herald, 3. 10. 1874.
17. 10. 1874.. 31. 10. 1874. etc.)
- 57: Most noticeably the one asking for 'punt y bunt'
for rybelwrs, they now asked that they
be paid 5/- in the £ upwards, and those working
at 10/- in the £ were to be considered
regular bargain takers. Claims were also put
in on behalf of the waste labourers for 24/-

a week, 27/- for the stonemasons and 21/- for the platelayers, about whose representation on the committee there had earlier been some discussion. It was also asked that wages be paid every four weeks.

C & D Herald, 17. 10. 1874.

58. W. J. Parry. 873 B, 3. 8. 1874.
59. Parry, op. cit., p. 12. (for the whole correspondence see Parry pp 7 - 34.)
letter of 22. 8. 1874.
60. see pp. 114 - 115.
61. Parry, p. 33.
62. see report of 1st Annual Conference,
(C & D Herald, 29. 5. 1875.)
63. W. J. Parry Mss (4) 8736 C 5. 12. 1874.
64. C & D Herald, 29. 5. 1875.
65. Parry Mss. 8736 C., 20. 11. 1875.
66. C & D Herald, 27. 5. 1876.
67. ibid., 2nd Annual Report.
68. C & D Herald, 27. 5. 1876.
69. C & D Herald, 26. 5. 1877.
70. ibid.
71. C & D Herald., 26. 5. 1877.
72. ibid.
73. ibid., ? 5. 1878..
74. C & D Herald., ? 5. 1878.
75. defined by Dylan Pritchard, the economic historian of the industry as being the period 1790 to 1877.
76. C & D Herald. 29. 5. 1875.
77. C & D Herald., 27. 5. 1876.
78. W. J.. Parry Mss etc., 22. 3. 1876.

79. ibid., 22. 4. 1876.
80. C. H. S. Transactions, Vol 29, 1968.
Gwynfryn Richards, " Chwareli Dyffryn Nantlle ".
pp 5 - 24, p. 14.
81. C & D Herald., 26. 5. 1877.
82. Parry Mss. 28. 7. 1877.
83. ibid., 29. 9. 1877.
84. ibid., January, February, 1875..
85. ibid., 30. 12. 1876..
86. ibid., 5. 5. 1877..
see also Annual Report N.W.Q.U..
87. Parry Mss. 29. 12. 1877.
88. ibid., 29. 7. 1878.
89. ibid., 1. 5. 1880.
90. N.W.Q. U. Minute Book, 3.. 1. 1878.
91. and strike pay was only paid to one....
92. C & D Herald. 29.. 5. 1880.
93. ibid., see R. Parry's speech.
94. C & D Herald. 28. 5. 1881.
95. N.W.Q.U.. Minute Book. 18. 1. 1879..
96. C & D Herald. 7. 6. 1879.
97. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 25.. 4. 1879.
98. Y Genedl Gymreig. 24. 5. 1882,, 30. 3. 1883..
99. ibid., 29. 5. 1880.
100. CRO N/622/11 9. 8. 1880..
101. Y Genedl Gymreig. 24. 5. 1882.
102. N.W.Q.U.. Minute Book, 27.. 9. 1879..
103. ibid., Minute Book, 9. 1. 1880.
104. C & D Herald. 29. 5. 1880.
105. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 1880..
106. ibid., 1881.
107. C & D Herald. 28. 5. 1881..

108. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 1881.
109. Y Genedl Gymreig. 24. 5. 1882.
110. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 26. 11. 1881.
111. Y Genedl Gymreig. 24. 5. 1882.
112. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 28. 4. 1883.
113. Y Genedl Gymreig.. 30. 5. 1863.
114. Coetmor Mss. 46 p.5.
115. according to W. J. Williams, Y Genedl Gymreig,
14. 5. 1884.
116. ibid.
117. ibid..
118. Coetmor Mss. p.5.
119. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 27. 9. 1884.
120. ibid., 29. 9. 1884.
121. C & D Herald. 16. 5. 1885.
122. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 8. 5. 1886.
123. Y Genedl Gymreig. 8. 3. 1882.
124. ibid., 15. 3.. 1882.
125. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 1. 7. 1882.
126. Y Genedl ^uGymreig. 2. 8. 1882.
_f
127. see pp. 120 - 122.
128. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 29.. 11. 1879.
129. Y Genedl Gymreig. 24. 5. 1882.
130. see Appendix. 4 for membership figures.
131. A scheme put forward by Bethesda to pay
unemployed members was turned down by the 1879
Conference and there was no further discussion
along these lines until the Nantlle Lodge
proposed a scheme to help t he old, the
infirm and the injured in August, 1881. The plan
was not adopted and Nantlle brought it up again

at the Annual Conference in 1883 where it was referred back to the lodges for discussion; the same happened in 1884.

It was a very cautious plan which offered nothing until a member had paid his dues regularly for 10 years but it was not acceptable. Finally a plan formulated by Mr. W. J. Parry was accepted by the 1885 Conference but was never implemented.

N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 27. 8. 1881;

Y Genedl Gymreig. 30. 5. 1883, 14. 5. 1884, 20. 5. 1885.

132. Y Genedl Gymreig. 24. 5. 1882.

133. CRO M/622/11 12. 1. 1881.

134. Y Genedl Gymreig. 15. 3. 1882.

135. C & D Herald. 29. 5. 1880.

136. Y Genedl Gymreig. 9. 1. 1884.

137. see pp.349 - 350.

138. see A.H. Dodd. A History of Caernarfonshire 1284 - 1900. (1974) pp 307 - 9, on emigration from the quarries in the 40s and 50s.

139. C & D Herald. 12. 1. 1878.

140. CRO M/622/11 1. 2. 1878.

141. ibid., 14. 3. 1878.

142. ibid., 19. 5. 1879.

143. ibid., 21. 3. 1881.

144. Caebraichycafn Minute Book. 13. 4. 1883.

145. ibid.,

146. ibid., 11. 5. 1883.

147. Not that this was an altogether fair reason for opposing Jones since it does not appear that anyone chose to work under contract and the majority of those doing so had earlier been turned away from their work at the quarry and could only find employment under the new system. This was especially true of boys and journeymen who seem to have made up the bulk of those working under contractors; when more boys were turned away in October 1884, for example, the Committee were asked to "remember those boys who were turned away before and are now under contractors". Minute Book. 15. 10. 1884.
148. C & D Herald., 29. 5. 1880.
149. ibid., 28. 5. 1881.
150. ibid.
151. Caebraichycafn Minute Book. 26. 9. 1884.
152. ibid., 15. 10. 1884.
153. Y Genedl Gymreig., 14. 5. 1884.
154. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 28. 7. 1884.
155. Annual Report, Y Genedl Gymreig. 20. 5. 1885.
156. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book, 26. 7. 1884.
157. One union member receiving a grant of £50 towards his emigrating to a farm in the United States. Y Genedl Gymreig. 20. 5. 1885.
158. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book., 28. 3. 1885.
159. Y Genedl Gymreig., 20. 5. 1885.
160. Caebraichycafn Minute Book. 23. 4. 1885.
161. Y Genedl Gymreig., 20. 5. 1885.

162. ibid.;
163. ibid.,
164. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 28. 3. 1885.
165. W.J.Parry, Y Genedl Gymreig., 20. 5. 1885.

1. The Lock-Out at the Dinorwic Quarries,
Llanberis, 1885 - 86.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Chwarelwyr dewr Dinorwic,
 Wel, safwn fel un gwr
 A mynwn rywbeth amgen
 Na thrais a bara a dwr;
 Er cryfed ydyw gormes
 A thraha o bob rhyw
 Mae ysbryd ein cyndadau
 Yng Nghymru eto'n fyw.</p> | <p>3. Os ydyw ein meistradoedd
 Yn meddwl plygwn ni
 O dan pob deddf osodant,
 Er cymaint yw ein cri;
 Gwell genym sefyll allan
 Am flwyddyn gyfan gron,
 Cyn yr awn ni byth yn
 gaethion
 I'r oruchwyliaeth hon.</p> |
| <p>2. Chwarelwyr dewr Dinorwic,
 Cydweithiwn oll fel un,
 A byddwn oll yn ffyddlawn
 Dros gael iawnderau dyn;
 Dyrchafwn faner rhyddid
 Yn uchel yn ein gwlad,
 Ymlidiwn o'n gororau,
 Bob trais, a thwyll, a brad.</p> | <p>4. Cymerwn galon, ddynion,
 Cawn gydymdeimlad llu,
 Er gwaethaf pob dichellion,
 Cyfia-wnder sydd o'n tu;
 Mae haul ar fryn yn canlyn
 Ystormydd mwyaf certh,
 A chofiwn oll, gyfeillion,
 "Mewn undeb y mae nerth".
 (1.)</p> |

The Dinorwic Quarry claws its way a thousand feet up the steep south westerly slopes of the Elidir in Caernarfonshire; up from the waters of Llyn Peris in galleries ninety feet high, the quarry reaches 1,400 feet above sea level and covers over 700 acres. Opposite rears Snowdon's bulky shoulder while across the narrow valley lies the village of Llanberis. Slate has long been quarried in the area but the quarries were not systematically worked until the mid-1780s. In 1809 Thomas Assheton Smith, owner of the Vaynol estates, took a direct interest in the working of this developing industry situated on his land. The quarries were extended and improved, communications were established through the difficult terrain, a railway opened to Port Dinorwic and port facilities for the export of the slates developed there. (2)

By mid-century the Dinorwic Quarries were a vast and profitable enterprise, the second largest quarry in the world, only the Penrhyn Quarry, smashing into the Elidir from the northern side was bigger. In 1859 two thousand men were employed and it was estimated that the quarries produced some £70,000 annual profit for the Assheton Smiths. (3) By 1885 the quarry employed two thousand seven hundred men who produced ninety thousand tons of slate annually. The men were drawn from over sixty towns and hamlets in Caernarfonshire and Anglesey though the great majority, and almost all of the skilled quarrymen, lived in the villages and hamlets that had grown up around the quarry. (4) Many of the labourers who travelled long distances to their work, particularly those from Anglesey, stayed throughout the week in " barracks " near their work and returned home only for Saturday afternoon and Sundays.

The owner of the quarries in 1885 was George William Duff Assheton Smith who had inherited the Vaynol estates from his uncle, the second Thomas Assheton Smith, on his coming of age in 1869. (5) On his estate, covering 36,000 acres and worth an annual rental of some £25,000, lived eighteen hundred tenants. (6)

The dispute which broke out in the quarries in October 1885 was an eventful and important one; just as the earlier victory of the Dinorwic men in 1874 had been a harbinger of success for the North Wales Quarrymen's Union, so the dispute of 1885 introduced long, desolate years of managerial aggression and bitter defeats for the slate quarrymen. The famous drama that was later to unfold in the Penrhyn disputes of 1896 - 97 and 1900-1903 followed a remarkably similar course to the 1885 events in Dinorwic.

The dispute took place against a disturbed background; the general election of November 1885, riots of the unemployed in London, and in Wales general agitation over the land question leading to disturbances over the payment of tithes, and a violent labour dispute in the Llanddulas limestone quarries. North Wales, indeed figured so prominently in these agitations that the Dinorwic dispute itself attracted considerable excited discussion. H.H. Hyndman of the Social Democratic Federation visited North Wales in January 1886 and wrote a long and uncharacteristically detailed account of his visit in the SDF's Justice in which he expressed the somewhat premature hope that

" we shall be able to organise social-democracy through the District. The ideas are already spreading despite the Nationalism of the people". (7)

Following the lock-out of 1874, which had witnessed the birth of the North Wales Quarrymen's Union, industrial relations at Dinorwic were fairly relaxed with few major issues cropping up to disturb either master or men. The depression of the late seventies, however, hit hard (8) and the last two months of 1878 witnessed a general wage reduction of 20% and before the end of the year short time, four and three-day working, was in operation. In January 1879 200 men were dismissed and another 100 were turned away in March; wages were cut again three times during the year and in January 1880 the price for working third quality slate was reduced and a new rule introduced insisting that a quarryman's count of slates amount to hundreds rather than to the half-hundreds which had been customary.

The men accepted these blows without protest,

realising that bad times brought bad wages but they were perturbed when their efforts to negotiate on dismissals in January 1879^{were} brusquely brushed aside by their employer. Since 1874 Assheton Smith had always received delegations from the men, treating them courteously and often acceding to their requests. Times, however, had changed and in 1879 the master replied that, " Mr. Assheton Smith did not intend seeing a deputation on the application of the men, as he cannot see that any benefit could be derived from it ". (9) In 1880 things were to get worse for in that year there was a change in the management of the quarry and the mellow Colonel Wyatt was replaced by the stricter John Davies soon to be accompanied by the Hon.. W.W.Vivian; "with the change of medium", complained the men, " came also a change in everything ". (10)

The new management was accused of introducing a regime of favouritism and partiality at the quarry and they continually infuriated local opinion by their political and religious sympathies. Following the general election of 1880 known Tory voters and supporters were rewarded and it was claimed that they were paid a bonus of one pound monthly for their services; (11) even more important, it was also suggested that they were granted the best bargains in the quarry and were more likely to be appointed to minor supervisory jobs. The fact that it seemed as if favour and not skill had earned them these positions enraged the majority of quarrymen for " nothing could be more irritating to the best feelings of an honest workman " (12) Feelings were further embittered as it became apparent that the custom of a son following his father into the quarry was being interrupted by the introduction of what looked suspiciously like an informal

religious and political test and some of the boys entering the quarry were now strangers to the area but, it was alleged, with Loyalist fathers. It is impossible to gauge how widespread this practice had become and it is difficult to believe that it was true of very many new hands, but in the depression and unemployment of the 80s even a handful of recruits chosen in this way would have been seen by the quarrymen as a grave threat to their families; it was also a serious undermining of the relationship which had previously existed between men and master in Dinorwic. When Assheton Smith was approached about this state of affairs in 1881 he made it clear that he still considered it to be " his first duty to give preference to the children of his own tenants "; (13) this duty, the men claimed, was persistently ignored by the quarry managers. Relationships deteriorated rapidly in the quarry and a dispute over the Employer's Liability Act in 1881 (14) embittered them further. For Assheton Smith, along with Lord Penrhyn immediately demanded that the men contract out of the law as he saw it as a slight on the good intentions of the employer and an interference in his freedom of action (contracting out legally was in fact impossible, what was aimed at was a promise from the men that they would not back up or initiate any prosecutions under the law). The men's almost unanimous decision in January 1881 was to remain under the protection of the Act. The managers retaliated by threatening to dismember the various welfare services offered by the quarry; by removing their support from the Workmen's Benefit Club, closing the Quarry Hospital and letting the doctor's residence to someone else, and by discontinuing the payment of pensions.

The men replied by reaffirming their desire to remain under the Act but by compromising considerably on the implications of so doing. By setting up an arbitration board which would judge cases they hoped to avoid recourse to the law itself and to the courts; moreover, they were ready to themselves contribute to the fund for injured persons. Assheton Smith would have nothing to do with such a scheme, pointing out that they either worked under the Act or they did not; there was no possibility of compromise. The men pleaded for the whole matter to go to arbitration but ^{the} only response of the management was to return the bank and cheque books of the Benefit Club to its quarryman secretary. The men yielded claiming that they did not wish to "endanger the good feeling that had existed between them and Mr. Assheton-Smith", perhaps more accurately that they did not wish to endanger the fruits of his paternalism, and signed an agreement contracting themselves out of the law on the 1st March 1881.

Ennobled by their victory the management continued in their attempt to reorganise the working relations at the quarry and things had come to such a pass that in June 1882 the men appealed that they be allowed to explain their opposition to a manager's setting evaluation of a bargain.

The men sent a deputation representing the whole works to see John Davies, the Works Manager, to raise the question but he refused to allow more than two of them to speak and informed them that no deputations

would be received in future and that all communications were to be in writing. The rudeness with which the deputation was treated, even more than the manager's ruling on further deputations, soured relationships considerably, for the men felt that they had been "insulted through their representatives". (15)

Until 1882 the managers had been tightening existing customs and regulations as far as they would go, now they started to introduce new rules which were eventually to lead to the explosion in October 1885. As we have seen Dinorwic was not alone in taking this course of action.

In an overwhelming labour intensive industry the effort to maintain profit levels in a declining market led not only to a cutting of wages but also to a confrontation with the customs and agreements which underlay wages,

Compared with Penrhyn production at Dinorwic appeared to be more expensive: in the early eighties production at Penrhyn was almost 40 tons per employee per year, in Dinorwic production was under 32 tons per employee. (16)

W.W.Vivian, the new general manager of the quarry and a man with wide experience of business affairs in Manchester, was not impressed with such a state of affairs and determined both that the men's customs would have to be altered and also that the labour force at the quarry would have to be drastically reduced. The months previous to the dispute were dominated by the attack on customs, the other aim of reducing the work-force did not become apparent until well into the dispute itself. (17)

At the end of 1882 a number of verbal bye laws and working

rules were introduced which the quarrymen considered "unnecessary and oppressive" (18) but they led to no major incidents. Things in fact seemed to be easing and a proposed protest by the men against the continuing favouritism in the works was pre-empted in August 1884 when the management summoned a deputation to inform them that all such favouritism and discrimination would be discontinued in the future, and that the "workmen from then on would be looked at quite apart from their religious and political beliefs". (197) All were in future to be oppressed equally by the stringent new rules that were being introduced and enforced. It was on this issue, rather than on the question of religious and political discrimination that the storm was to break. Religion and politics, however, had ensured that relationships in the quarry were as tense and bitter as they could get and the record of the management in the five years previous to the lock-out ensured that they were distrusted and hated by a large body of the quarrymen.

Part of the accepted rhythm of the quarry month had always been the day off taken at its end but in early 1885 the men working at the Steam Mills section of the quarry, most of whom were bargain takers, were refused this customary full holiday and were forced to work until 10.00.a.m. on that day, an event which caused much disquiet. (20) Then in July came the first clash (21) arising initially out of a relatively minor incident; Davies, the resident manager, saw a few men, perhaps ten, leaving their work early and climbing up from their workplace to the top of one of the tips where they stood for a while waiting for the final hooter to sound. When Davies attempted to find out from their workmates who

these men were he found no response and all the men pleaded ignorance of the early departures. Furious at this attitude Davies suspended the whole gallery of 53 men for eight days. (22)

When, the next day, it became known in the quarry that this measure was in fact being carried out and that the men had been suspended the whole of the upper section of the quarry ceased working and marched down to hold a meeting where they were joined by all the other workmen. The meeting was an angry one, the main topic being the management's policy of "restricting the freedom of the worker by introducing endless petty rules". (23)

The men complained not only of the rules themselves but also of the uncertainty they produced for apparently the managers were experimenting by introducing rules one day and modifying them or repealing them the next. The men's case was that the "over exactness in petty, worthless and arbitrary rules, and those being made by ignorant and inexperienced men, being constantly changed and transgressing old customs which have been in force in the quarry for years is certainly intolerable". (24.)

After the meeting the men went back to their work but their spontaneous and united action had been an impressive warning to the managers and the dispirited unionists in Penrhyn marvelled at the spirit being shown in Dinorwic envious of the absence of the bitter rivalry among the men which was characteristic of their struggle. (25)

Vivian, the principal manager, though warning that any further mass meetings during working hours would not be tolerated, in fact accepted the case that the suspension of the 53 had been a mistake and he admitted that Davies had made "an error of judgement". (26.) The suspended

men however were only allowed a day's pay in lieu of their eight day absence, a payment which infuriated the men for " if they were entitled to one day's wage they were certainly entitled to eight ". (275) The fact that Vivian had admitted the management's error left the Radical press to hail the events as a victory for the quarrymen but as a letter from a Dinorwic quarryman in the Genedl Gymreig reminded them " the general oppression in the form of strict and repressive rules, insulting to any man who holds that he is a man ", (286) still remained. The writer complained that the negotiating committee had failed to bring their agreement to a mass meeting which, he claimed would have sent them back for something more substantial. Such was the atmosphere in the quarry and it must have been obvious that it would need only one more incident to lead to a real clash which could not now be long averted.

The incident happened in October and the scene was again the Steam Mills, (297) the men there, goaded already by having their monthly holiday curtailed were informed ten minutes before they were due to stop working that they were to continue until 12, thus cutting their time off by another two hours.

The men objected and, believing that the ruling was to apply in any case to the following and not ^{to} the present month, left their work at 10. There the versions differ, the men claiming that they had been granted permission to leave by the resident manager, a claim which he hotly denied. The men were suspended for a week for leaving their work early and all the appeals made to the managers were rejected; in consequence the whole body of quarrymen gathered together on 12th October to again

protest what they considered a grave injustice. They were refused permission to meet in the quarry and so marched some miles to another spot to hold their meeting. They returned to work the next day and there was relative calm for ten days until the management, on 23rd October, posted a notice in the quarry which read,

" Notice to all Men and Boys employed at the Dinorwic Quarries

Inasmuch as a mass meeting was held during work hours on Monday afternoon, the 12th October instant, in defiance of an order made in July last when you were cautioned that such a meeting, if held during work hours, would not be tolerated,

Notice is hereby given,

That your services will not be required after Saturday, the 31st October instant; and that all barrack furniture, tools, velocipedes, materials, and other effects, belonging to you must be removed before twelve o'clock at noon on Saturday, the 31st October instant... " (30)

There was no doubt that the lock-out had been engineered by the managers, their exact motives are not clear but a major aim must have been to force the men to accept with less protestations the widespread new regulations that were being introduced; to show finally and unmistakeably who held the whip hand. The men, however, were also determined not to accept the reorganisation without some resistance and spontaneous demonstrations such as the two one-day walk-outs that had already occurred might well have persisted and grown into strike action. For the men were irreconcilably opposed to some of the rules, considering them to strike at their

fundamental r-ights as quarrymen. The rules they objected to most were those which restricted their liberties; it was not, for example, permissible to sell any newspapers in the quarry nor to organise any sort of colle~~c~~tion without the permission of the manager. (31) In particular the men objected to those regulations which curtailed or interfered with their spare time; as bargain takers (and 2100 of the 2700 involved were bargain takers, (32) they felt it their right to determine, within limits, when they were to work and that if a man had a pressing engagement to meet or task to perform outside the quarry then he had the right to leave; the need to make proper wages, and to satisfy his partners, would, it was thought, impose a sufficient discipline. The management, however, had introduced a rule which insisted that if a man was to be away from the quarry he had to receive permission, from the overlooker for short absences and from the manager if he was to be away for more than a day. This must have seemed fairly reasonable to them and indeed, even the Genedl Gymreig, extremely sympathetic as it was to the men's case, also considered it fair.(33) To the quarrymen, however, it was an intolerable invasion of their freedom and dignity. One period of persistent absence from work which the management were specifically keen to discourage was the annual hay harvest. They accepted that a man had a right to stay at home to gather his own hay and even that his neighbour had the right to assist him but they refused to allow men to go to work in the harvest of others than their immediate neighbours. This was an attempt to prevent men, many of whom did not themselves have any land,

from spending too much time away from the quarry . . .
going around the country to work in the hay. How common this practise had been we do not know but it must have been fairly widespread for this was the rule, above all others, which the men objected to most. It was, in fact, a patently absurd and unfair rule based on an ignorance of local conditions for friendship, rather than just neighbourliness, was the main criterion for such work in such an area; thus a man would surely wish to help out his own quarry partner in the harvest even though he could live some distance away while he might not at all feel so compelled to help at a smallholding neighbouring his own home, which might in any case be in a village. To make matters worse the definition of neighbourliness originally adopted by the management was one based on parish boundaries, which made the case of a man with the boundary running between his home and his friend's far m an obviously unjust one.

Y Genedl Gymreig pounced on these anomalies (34..) and reported at some length the hypothetical case of the quarryman who was forced to stay at home and watch his poor, widowed mother struggle on the other side of the lake to get her few precious loads of hay gathered before the approaching cloudburst washed them away.

It was not so much these particulars which infuriated the men, however, but the attack on their freedom implicit in them; for ^{as we have seen} it was part of their definition of a quarryman that he was able to regulate his own working life within what they considered to be the palpably obvious bounds of common sense. (35) Even so, had the management been one which they could have trusted the men might well have acceded to the rule; Vivian and Davies, however, were not men they trusted and they felt

sure that to ask permission of them would have often resulted in a "No"; that was why the meeting of October 12th had passed a motion of no confidence in the managers and why the men were to come to call for their removal.

The lock-out continued through November with no significant moves from either side and with numerous appeals to the men to avoid the public houses, (36) to behave in a manner deserving of the honour accorded the quarrymen, (37) and to remain united; many hymns were sung and prayer meetings sought guidance from above. (38) The union as such had played a very small role in the whole matter though one of its vice-presidents, Griffith Griffiths, originally of Porthmadog, was also a member of the eight-man strike committee. Now, however, the men turned to their union for relief; it is not known exactly what percentage of the men were fully paid up members of the union but the initial payments made would suggest that there were some 1,400 members eligible to receive lock-out pay of 10/- a week, i.e. just over half of the men involved. (39) Others may have been members but not eligible. The question of relief immediately brought a serious problem and the threat of dissension as those who were not members of the union looked enviously on those receiving lock-out pay.. A mass meeting in early November urged the union members to share their money with others (40) and this did indeed happen but the matter was to cause further dispute in early February 1886.
(41)

Support came from many quarters; at the beginning of December Nantlle quarrymen declared their solidarity at a large meeting (42) and the following week a meeting of Bethesda shopkeepers and merchants also pledged their

support; (43) at a well attended meeting in Caernarfon a local watchmaker promised that " while a loaf remained in Caernarfon it would be shared with the quarrymen " (44) and £230 was raised to further emphasise the point; collections were also made in the rich Welsh chapels of Liverpool (45) whose members tended to see ^{the} struggle as one for religious freedom. (46)

The union's funds, slowly built up since 1874, were being drained and on January 23rd (47) the union council urgently discussed a plan for levying union members, a plan which the Lodges rejected in favour of collections (48). In February payments to Dinorwic had to be discontinued (49) and by March the union's coffers were quite empty. (50)

By early December the managers had decided that the men had learnt their lesson and were ready to accept defeat; on the 9th December a list of rules, including all those the men had originally objected to, was formulated by Vivian and publicised. They were to be accepted by all those seeking work at the Quarry and the Quarry would reopen to take men on again on Monday December the 15th. A mass meeting of all the men decided not to return under the rules nor indeed under the existing management. (51) at all but it was with some apprehension that they approached the morning of the fifteenth, for though there had not been many willing to blackleg (those that had, had had their names published in Y Werin) (52) there had been rumours that a substantial body were now willing to restart work on their employer's terms and to attend the Quarry on Monday morning. Consequently preparations were made and December 15th was to be a memorable day in the history of Dinorwic.

Early on Monday morning a large crowd of quarrymen

and their wives gathered on the road to the quarry, many of the men armed with cudgels; (153) they were there to guard against anyone who might have wished to work that morning and, their picket successful, they might well have all gone home later in the day without any disturbance. By coincidence, however, Monday the 15th was also the day that Assheton Smith had recalled the silver instruments worth £400 which he had given to the 'Royal Vaynol Silver Band' (254) or Band Llanrug as it was commonly known. On their way to return the precious instruments to a room in the Quarry the Band struck up a tune and marched together past the picketing crowd. Ennobled by the music the crowd fell in behind and a great body of men, women and children marched into the quarry where Vivian and the other managers were waiting to take on workmen. With the crowd completely surrounding the office, as they had done before in February 1874, the bandmaster Mr. Tidswell went in to offer up the instruments only to be told by a rather put out Mr. Vivian that he had had no intention of recalling the instruments at all. Sensing their strength the crowd decided to exercise their power and a note was handed to the Police Sergeant who had appeared on the scene to the effect that if Vivian and Davies did not leave the quarry in ten minutes they would have to take the consequences. Davies appeared in a few minutes and agreed to leave if the crowd would part to let them through. This was done and the manager and his assistants walked through the hooting and jeering crowd, into a railway truck which carried ^{them} off to Portdinorwic. The crowd then decided that they would give a similar notice to the few men who were continuing to work in the quarry; these men were not quarrymen but carpenters,

blacksmiths, a pattern maker, a fitter, an engine driver and, somehow, a sailor. A note was again handed to the police sergeant, who seems to have been quite willing to act as the crowd's emissary, and within a few moments the men fled, though two of them continued to receive the attentions of a section of the crowd who followed them back to the village and to the doors of the police station where they had gone to seek refuge.

During the whole episode no actual violence had been used at all and once they had ensured that the quarry was deserted the crowd marched off again, nor did the adventure show any signs of previous planning, it happened spontaneously out of the meeting of the band and the picket. What had been done was not, however, without significance, never before (or since) had the whole management of a major quarry been driven out of their own quarry. Despite the seriousness of the incident there seem to have been no immediate repercussions, and no arrests or summonses followed the incident. The unfortunate Mr. Tidswell however, who had been receiving £10 a month from Assheton Smith for training the Llanrug Band, was relieved of his post and returned to England. (55)

There were other incidents following the attempt to re-open the quarry; the telephone wire connecting the quarry with Portdinorwic was cut, a haystack was set on fire and another damaged by pouring water into it, some of the few who attempted to work had the doors of their homes tied up so that they could not get out, others were pelted with turf and stones. (56.) Such incidents drew forth a sharp rebuke from the men's committee and a mass meeting in the New Year condemned

" the work of some people in damaging the property of Assheton Smith Esq., " (57)

These incidents, and the fact that the men were no longer technically locked out, but were rather, themselves refusing to work under a particular management, brought a new spirit to the struggle. Owen Jones, Ebenezer, told a meeting on the 15th " Today the battle starts. We have been on the defensive but now we are on the offensive" (58) another speaker pleaded with the meeting, " Do not go back to Egypt my people. Demand the Elidir (59) again... you will destroy the slate works of creation if you give way ". The men determined that " as a class of workers we refuse completely and resolutely to work under such rules and managers ".

In the new year (60) the men offered to put the whole matter before an arbiter, but Assheton Smith would have nothing to do with such a scheme at this time; he also refused blankly to receive the men's committee as a deputation though he left open a hint that he might receive another representative to speak for them.

At this time there was also a bitter and well publicised strike at the Llysfaen limestone quarry in Llanddulas, (61) which though some distance away from Dinorwic nevertheless held certain parallels with the slate quarrymen's struggle. Following disturbances in Llanddulas when blacklegs were three times taken to the quarry and were three times repelled, 60 policemen and over 100 military were moved into the area. Fears now spread that the troops were also to come to Dinorwic to allow the re-opening of the quarry and the proposal was in fact discussed by the magistrates (62). Many and fiery were the speeches made in anticipation of such

that they had acted improperly in holding their meeting on October 12th and called also on them to withdraw the vote of no confidence in the management which had been passed at that meeting; they also contained a number of vague promises as to the future fairness and practical experience of the future management but it made it obvious that all the disputed rules were to stand, albeit to be interpreted leniently, and that not all the men would get their jobs back at the end of the dispute. In reply the men drew up their own counter-proposals which demanded that:

1. all the men at the Dinorwic Quarries shall work under practical experienced men.
2. all the workmen should be governed by and give obedience to fair and reasonable rules.
3. every workman will be acknowledged as such on his own merits, independently of all political and religious connections.
4. as the men were locked out in a body they shall be allowed to resume work also in a body instead of applying individually.
5. a signed agreement be reached between master and men on these questions. (67)

Following this rejection of his peace plan, relations between Parry and the strike committee became increasingly difficult; he complained to Vivian on January 25th that he could not "approve of the stand they have taken and trust it will not influence you and Mr. Assheton Smith against them. I have done my best, I can assure you, and I believe I have the support of the best amongst the men as well as amongst the general public". (68)

Two days later he was again at pains to explain that

the rejection of the terms by the men was not his fault, " I am doing my best to prove myself worthy of the confidence you have placed in me, " he wrote, but " you know the kind of men I have to deal with ", (69.)

It now became apparent that the kernel of the men's case was the removal of John Davies from the resident managership and his replacement by a 'practical' man, that is a man who had some experience of actually working slate rock. Davies had been connected with the Dinorwic Quarries for some 40 years and had been an under manager for eleven. The men maintained that his first 29 years had taught him " experience in figures and nothing more ", (70) he had presumably been a clerk during those years; while as to his term as a manager " his opportunities to gain a knowledge of slate quarrying consisted mainly of a daily walk from his house to the various offices in the works ". Such a man, they claimed, had no right to run a slate quarry on which depended their livelihood and indeed their lives.

To this accusation Vivian retorted (71) that the men did not really object to Davies' competence but to the stringency with which he applied the quarry rules and that their main objection was to the rules themselves which, he claimed, insisted on their doing a fair day's work. The men conceded the point but parried that only an incompetent manager could dream of introducing such rules in the first place for they displayed a total ignorance of the demands of the work. As an example they took the need to ~~q~~work the rock before dawn on a hot summer's day, a necessary act which would be prevented by any rules on working hours which did now allow the men themselves to decide. (72) The men's case was that the

rules themselves were impracticable and unfair and proved the lack of experience of the managers but that they would concede to work under them if the manager ~~be~~ a practical man; that is a man who would interpret the rules in a lenient and sensible way; and John Davies, they felt, was not such a man.

Their other demand, which assumed greater importance as the end of the dispute grew nearer, was that the quarry accept back all those who had worked there in October. It became apparent, however, that this was not to be and that the lock-out had been the opportunity taken, or **engineered** perhaps, by the management for a thorough re-organisation of work within the quarry, a re-organisation which would leave some 300 men without work. This was made clear by Vivian when he informed Parry that before October he was employing more men than he needed and warned, " I intend altering this ". (73)

Toward the end of January a body calling itself the Non-Unionists Association (74.) appeared and sent letters to the press, signed by ten Dinorwic quarrymen claiming that **represented men** ~~that~~ ~~it~~ ~~was~~ quite willing to work but for the " intimidation and violence shown "; the letter emphasised that the members of the Association, while not opposed to the men's stand were, because they were not union members, quite unable to carry on as they were on " the verge of actual want ". Such a group, though originating amongst a few, could have been influential in splitting the union from the non-union men, though there is no record of their growing as an 'Association'. It must, however, have been with developments such as these foremost in their minds and with a growing consciousness that the union fund could not sustain them

for much longer that the committee, on February 11th, approached Mr. John Robinson, the owner of the Talysarn Quarry in the Nantlle Valley, to intercede with Vivian on their behalf. Robinson seems to have been greatly respected by the quarrymen, despite the fact that he was, unlike some other Nantlle quarry masters, a Conservative and an Anglican. (75) He had earlier impressed the men by making a gift of coal to them in January. (76).

Robinson had several interviews with Vivian and reported to the committee (77) advising them to re-apply for work. He convinced them that the reorganisation of the quarry, though entailing a short term reduction in labour would eventually lead to an expanded work force. He also promised that the work would henceforth be carried out fairly and that no-one would be victimised for their politics, religion or role during the lock-out and that the works would be managed by "able, practical, men". The committee accepted these proposals on the morning of Saturday the 13th of February and put them to a mass meeting in the afternoon. The meeting was far from satisfied with the proposals and bitterness was felt that as many as 300 of them would not be allowed work. There was some interruption of the chairman and one man moved that motions should be put by the meeting and not by the committee; another shouted "what have we gained after fighting for fifteen weeks?" to which another replied, "nothing at all".

An attempt to adjourn the final decision was made but was overruled by the platform and after some bitter argument the men finally agreed unanimously to return to work; but it is clear that there were still many voices

amongst the quarrymen who were bitterly dissatisfied with the verdict. " You know the difficulties and opposition I had to contend with ", wrote Parry to Vivian following the men's final decision, " and the step had to be taken suddenly and got through quickly". (78)

The men marched from the meeting to the quarry offices in a body some two miles long but no amount of gestures of solidarity could hide the fact that the quarrymen of Dinorwic had suffered a major defeat; after fifteen weeks out the rules still remained, the managers still remained and the quarry had been reorganised and the labour force reduced substantially. It is difficult even to accept the committee's judgement of the affair, that they should not " cry victory but rather rejoice at having won an honourable peace ". (79)

When the list of those not receiving work was finally known the men held another mass meeting (80) angrier than the earlier one. There was much criticism of the seemingly arbitrary way in which men had been refused work and it was without enthusiasm that the meeting voted for a fairly realistic motion which declared that " we as workmen are of the opinion that the wisest course we can adopt under the present circumstances is to return to work under the terms offered, although such terms are not all that we desire "; the motion was initially only voted for by half the meeting and some young men tried unsuccessfully to move an adjournment; peace was counselled however, even by some men who had themselves lost their jobs, and the whole meeting finally acquiesced in the defeat.

" True, they have been beaten, it is useless to assert the contrary as some do; but it is equally true

that they have not been disgraced ". (81) Such was the judgement of the North Wales Observer and Express on the final issue of the Dinorwic Lock-out. The dispute left the men demoralised and divided and with confused and contradictory feelings toward their union. They had suffered considerable hardship and had not only gained nothing but had witnessed a commitment somewhat less than total to their cause exhibited by the President of their union. This, and the fact that the General Secretary of the Union, W.J.Williams, had played virtually no part in organising the dispute left a bitter residue of distrust toward the NWQU amongst many of the men. (82)

The dispute introduced to North Wales a new style of business management which was determined to wrench from the quarrymen what control of wages and production they still retained. W.W.Vivian in Dinorwic was soon joined by E.A.Young as manager of Penrhyn; two men from outside the slate industry whose training had been in the harsh world of business, (83) a training which did not make them sympathetic to 'inefficient' customs and practices. Vivian was clearly in charge throughout the Dinorwic dispute and Assheton Smith himself played only a minor role. This was partly because Smith was severely embarrassed during the course of the dispute by a court case in which he was being sued for shooting a beater while hunting, a case tailor-made for the jibes of the Welsh Radical press, (84) but it is also clear that Smith had no stomach for, and less understanding of, the unpleasantness in his quarries which distracted him from his many hobbies. (85) He even went so far as to organise, at his own theatre in the Vaynol, theatrical performance, in which he himself starred, " the receipts

from which are to swell the fund for the persons suffering from the effect of the strike at his slate quarries ". Vivian was not a man predisposed toward such behaviour and during the years following the quarrymen's defeat in 1886 he was quick to drive home his advantage.(86) He continued to allow regular deputations to visit him with grievances though his reactions were invariably inflexible and at times ruthless; In July 1892 Thomas Parry, a member of a deputation to visit Vivian, was summarily dismissed because he was accused of leaking incorrect information to the press about the deputation's meeting with Vivian. (87) Information in this, as in other discipline cases, was elicited from informers in various parts of the quarry.(88.) An earlier victim had been Owen Williams of Portdinorwic, an articulate and energetic Liberal who until his dismissal at a moment's notice in 1889 had been employed all his working life as a barrow-man on the Portdinorwic quay. (89,) No reason for his dismissal was given but Vivian's lawyers, in a privately drafted document, explained that he was held to have been one of the agitators responsible for the 1885 dispute and that " in consequence of information lately conveyed privately to Mr. Vivian he considered it desirable in order to maintain discipline and to avoid the possibility of unpleasantness in the future to dispense with this man's services, which he did on a pay day ". (90) Of many and of such " desirable " actions did the defeat of 1886 consist.

Blaenau Ffestiniog in Merionethshire was in the late nineteenth century a town renowned more for its political radicalism than for its trade union militancy. With a population of over eleven thousand in 1891 the Ffestiniog Urban District constituted the biggest of the slate quarry towns (91) and though remote and in mountainous country, strung out as it was along the rocky head of the Vale of Ffestiniog, 700 feet above sea level, it was well connected by rail links.

It was here that the Irish land reformer Michael Davitt had come to a rousing welcome in February 1886; it was the quarrymen of this district who had pushed their radicalism so far as to split the Merioneth Liberal Party in the by-election of 1885 by putting up their own Independent Liberal candidate. And in 1895 they had forced A.M. Dunlop, the General Manager of the Oakeley Quarries to resign as Chairman of the U.D.C. because of his inability to speak Welsh (.92); and as early as 1892 candidates were put up in local elections under a "labour" designation. (.93.)

This political combativeness thrived in a political atmosphere considerably freer than that of the other main slate centres of Bethesda and Llanberis; unlike those areas. Blaenau Ffestiniog was not a one-quarry town; the largest quarry in the area, the giant Oakeley mine employing in 1891 over 1600 men, was only half the size of the Dinorwic or Penrhyn Quarries; and there were several moderately sized quarries in the vicinity the bigger of which were Llechwedd, Votty and Bowydd, and Maenofferen. (94) The people of Ffestiniog

therefore owed allegiance to no one master and the number of quarries meant that men could, and did, move from one to another. There were, moreover, political divisions amongst the masters, most obviously between the Tory Oakeley and the Liberal Greaves, owners of the Llechwedd mine. The Tory cause, well established in the shadow of Penrhyn and Vaynol influence, was hardly rooted at all in Blaenau; the Balance Sheet of the local Conservative and Unionist Club for 1899 tells a sorry tale with few individual subscribers other than nine publicans, two vicars and the Oakeley family; we are "often at a disadvantage", reported the committee, "having only the working class to carry on the work".(95)

Trade unionism had been established in the town since 1874 but the North Wales Quarrymen's Union had not flourished. There had been a reasonably effective campaign to reduce hours in 1882 (96) but, apart from this, there were few attempts to make all the quarries represented on the Ffestiniog Lodge move together. There had been disputes in the area: the small Rhosydd mine witnessed a strike in October 1886 and there was a dispute in Graig Ddu in the same month. (97) The Cwmorthin mine above Tanygrisiau was the scene of various clashes in the eighties and early nineties (98) while labourers in the Votty and Bowydd mine stopped work in April 1885, (99) but these had been minor skirmishes indeed compared to the 1874 and 1885 battles in Penrhyn and Dinorwic.

The Llechwedd stoppage of 1893 was, by far the most important dispute in the town in the nineteenth century.

The quarries negotiated on their own behalf rather than through the Union lodge; in 1887 there were 876

union members in twelve quarries in Ffestiniog out of a total number of over 3,200 quarrymen. (100) The Oakeley Quarry, the largest slate mine in the world, had a relatively low percentage of men organised but there was a committee of quarrymen conducting some kind of regular negotiations from the late 1880s (101)

In Llechwedd each "caban" in the quarry sent representatives to a general committee. (102)

The main problem confronting the union in the area was the number of different quarries in the lodge, each with different procedures and customs; (103) the number of quarries competing for labour also gave the quarrymen an obvious answer to local dissatisfaction. 'I do not value my employment so much as that', said Robert Roberts, a rockman in the New Welsh Slate Quarry in 1895, 'if I cannot get work in one place I can get it in another' (104) Such an answer was not so meaningful to men in Dinorwic or Penrhyn who were forced to stay in one quarry and fight.

By the early nineties Blaenau was sharing in the general air of excitement which an apparent quickening of the market had brought to the quarrymen. In 1892 the men working in the area had voted 1526 to 248 in favour of pushing on to a strike for an improvement in wages to 5/- a day. (105) In November of that year, however, they disappointed their fellow unionists by accepting something less than this sum. (106)

In Llechwedd the situation remained tense even after the November settlement, which had raised wages by 2/- to 27/- a week, (107) and there were threatened walk-outs twice in early 1893. Of the 486 men working in Llechwedd in that year (108) only 125 were trade unionists, of whom only 75 were fully paid up; this did not dampen

the men's anger, however, on the contrary it had been the non-unionists who had been the most willing to strike, being persuaded not to do so only with some difficulty by the union members. (109)

The struggle in Llechwedd followed a pattern similar to the other disputes in the slate industry breaking out as an angry protest against the ever-tightening grip of regulations at work and ending as a desperate attempt to prevent victimization. It is not clear why the Llechwedd men found the rules in force at their work more intolerable than other quarrymen in the district found theirs. It may have been a consequence of the November settlement which was not as well received by J.E.Greaves, part-owner, with his brother, and general manager of the Llechwedd mine, as by other quarry owners; (110) regulations may have been tightened in an attempt to boost production in order to cover the cost of the rise in wages. Technical difficulties in the mine, particularly those resulting from the use of water power for the machinery in the slate dressing sheds, seem also to have aggravated the situation. Whatever the cause Charles Warren Roberts, the resident manager of the Llechwedd, complained in 1895 of the 'great deal of trouble' he had experienced in getting the men to accept quarry rules. (111)

The men complained bitterly about the strictness of many new regulations, 'it is hardly possible', they explained, 'to move either to the right or to the left without breaking some rule or other'. (112) In particular they objected to the discontinuation of old customs, such as the right to take home a round piece of slate, or the walk to the top of the tip before the

bell for the end of their shift rang, the right to take a day off to attend a funeral was also being threatened. (113) Above all, the men objected to the stringent way the rules were being applied and to what they considered to be the severity of punishments meted out by the management. (114)

A further complication at the quarry was the shift system, adopted because of the shortage of water, and which affected some categories of men. In other quarries these men worked two shifts: 4.a.m. to 12 and then 12 until 8 p.m; in the Llechwedd, however, a form of split shift system appears to have operated which meant that some men were forced to stay idle at the quarry for three and a half hours with strict rules to prevent them leaving. (115) This, and the other rules and regulations in force, infuriated the men, they felt that ' working in the quarry has become almost intolerable ' and that they were ' surrounded by... a thousand and more petty and useless rules ' (116).

The anger boiled over during an incident on May 17th when a Griffith Jones disagreed with the under-manager as to the time he was entitled to leave work. Having, as he thought, finished his shift (117) Jones refused to obey the manager's order to return. During the ensuing argument a crowd of men gathered around and when Jones was sent home they walked out too bringing the rest of the mine out with them. (118)

There is no doubt that this was a spontaneous gesture of frustration and anger by the men, a protest against the whole running of the quarry rather than simply over the case of Griffith Jones. One of the men's leaders, Cllr. Ellis Hughes made this quite clear at the mass meeting following the walk-out. ' The storm has been

coming for some time, ' he said, ' this feeling has arisen because of the lack of trust in the officials.

We are not asking for anything except that we be treated like men". (119) It had been the cry of the Dinorwic men of 1885 and was to be the cry again of the Penrhyn men of 1900. And J.E.Greaves' reply was also familiar: 'By your actions you have taken the management into your own hands and by that you have made yourselves no longer workmen in the Llechwedd... There is no safety for a house if two lords govern it'. (120) The dispute had thus erupted over the perennially burning question in the slate quarries - what were the limits of the control to be exercised at work by men and by masters?

Following the walk-out the men marched to hold a mass meeting in Four Crosses where a strong delegation was elected to speak to the management (121) concerning the unfair way Griffith Jones had been treated. The delegation returned to inform the meeting that they had made no progress on Griffith Jones' case and that, moreover, the management were insisting that all the men must re-apply individually for work. The management had clearly understood very quickly the opportunity the dispute offered to exclude activists from their employ. The men rejected such a course and elected a strike committee of 24. (122)

The committee soon arranged for the facts of the dispute to be publicized and organised a meeting of quarrymen from all the local quarries at which a general committee to assist the strikers was elected. (123) Fund raising was a major concern and the fund was able to give 10/- to each head of a family and 5/- to each single workman; NWQU members were not to receive anything

from the general fund as they were in receipt of benefit from the union. (124)

The men soon realized their weak position and agreed to drop all grievances until they had returned to work, but they still would not accept any individual return. Greaves, however, would not yield on this point, and at a meeting on July 3rd the men agreed overwhelmingly to a motion that 'we accept Messrs. Greaves' offer and will put it to the test, and if any of us are left out that we shall stop work'.

On the next morning, therefore, the men returned to the quarry and filed one by one through the quarry office to seek employment " on Messrs. Greaves' terms ". (125) All went well until the management refused employment to some men, including some of the committee-members. The applications for work promptly ceased and there was some disturbance in the quarry before all the men marched back down to the town and, in an angry spirit, condemned the Greaves brothers for their action.

Greaves offered no reason as to why some of the men were refused work but, a week later, he sent a conciliatory note to the men explaining that the management ' were eager to meet our old workmen in every way possible, and are therefore prepared to give them permission to leave their tools here for the time being if they so wish '. But, they added, 'we take this opportunity to state finally that we shall not move from the position we have taken'. The message was mis-timed, however, for the men's attitude had hardened and a mass meeting voted to immediately remove all tools from the quarry. (126) New initiatives were undertaken to collect funds with two local ministers, the

Reverends Gernyw Williams and John Williams, dispatched to various parts of the country. Ministers in Cricieth, Pwllheli, Nefyn and other places were also written to with requests for support (127) and circulars were sent to ministers of various denominations throughout Wales asking them to distribute them in their chapels, (128) further chapels were circulated the next week. Other fund raising schemes were also arranged: a group of quarrymen were sent on a musical tour through Anglesey while a section of the Llan Ffestiniog Silver Band travelled through Montgomeryshire and then on to South Wales. (129) Money also came from elsewhere: the Caernarfon branches of the Printers Unions organised a 'worker's meeting' in the town in July to help the Llechwedd men (130) while the Caebraichycafn lodge of the NWQU lent them £100 in August (131). Fund raising was successful 'beyond anything t hat they expected '(132) and the allowance to each man was raised in mid-August to £1 for a head of family and 10/- to a single man. (133)

At a meeting towards the end of July the men confessed that they had been somewhat impetuous in leaving their work on May 17th and assured Greaves that they had not previously planned a strike, they also apologised for the disturbances that had broken out when the quarry had briefly re-opened on July 4th and went on to set aside all grievances they may previously have held against the management. (134) All they asked for was that no-one be excluded from the quarry. Greaves gave no assurances to this effect and on August 7th a meeting of the men confirmed that ' we cannot see our way clear to accepting their terms and leaving our leaders behind '.(135)

The NWQU's executive committee had meanwhile been

watching the dispute with interest. Resentment toward the new rules was general throughout the industry and the Llechwedd dispute seemed to offer an opportunity for fighting the issue without too great a financial burden to the union. 'It would be a great advantage to us as quarrymen to fight this principle in the Llechwedd, where there are only 500 workers. The same thing is to be found everywhere ', pointed out Thomas Parry to the executive on July 1st and toward the end of August the union accepted the strike committee's suggestion that an extraordinary conference of the union be convened in early September to discuss assistance to the Llechwedd men.

But in the meantime support for the struggle was crumbling amongst the Llechwedd men themselves, a process assisted by rumours that men from other quarries were seeking work in the idle mine. (136) The special NWQU conference was held in secret session at Caernarfon on Saturday September 2nd but little came of it other than a resolution urging the men to go to arbitration. Arbitration had been sought earlier in the dispute but had not been pursued since the chosen arbitrator, A.Osmond Williams of Castell Deudraeth, had refused to take part. (137) It was, in any case, highly unlikely that Greaves would accept any such scheme.

Aware of the inefficacy of the NWQU's suggestion, the strike committee met on the same day ' to make arrangements against the danger of the majority being for a return to work '. (138) The mass meeting on Monday, September 4th, rejected a motion containing the NWQU's arbitration recommendation and voted instead, as the committee had feared, for a motion that they " apply for

their work back on Messrs. Greaves' terms ". (139)

The committee met that afternoon to organise a fund to assist those of their number that would not be allowed back to work. After sixteen weeks the men returned to work without their leaders. There were in the end, three Llechwedd "martyrs" - D.G. Williams, John Hughes and Ellis Hughes, (140) three of the most prominent and effective trade union and radical leaders in the locality. Ellis Hughes had won a seat as councillor for the Teigl ward in March 1892 when he had stood as a 'labour and temperance' Liberal. (141) D.G. Williams (142) was also a prominent leader; considered a "radical amongst Radicals" he had been active in the 1882 hours struggle in Ffestiniog (143) and he had chaired the committee that backed the independent Liberal candidate in 1885, (144) he represented the Ffestiniog Lodge for many years on the executive committee of the NWQU and in 1891 he had been elected annual president of the union, he also served as a vice-president in 1892 and 1893, in February 1892 he had stood unsuccessfully as a 'labour' candidate in a Liberal test ballot in the Fourcrosses ward. (145)

The third victim, John Hughes, had worked in the Llechwedd as a rockman for 27 years and he also had stood unsuccessfully in the elections of March 1892 under a "labour" label. (146) Two years after his victimization he was still without work, so it was with the voice of experience that he was able to explain to the Committee of Inquiry into Merionethshire Slate Mines in 1895 why quarrymen remained silent as to the true facts concerning safety in the mines and during inquests on men fatally injured at their work; men did not tell the truth, he explained, "because they fear that if they

told the truth it might cause the~~m~~ inconvenience in the quarry ", (147) and it must have been with a note of bitterness in his voice that he went on: " there are in Ffestiniog and Caernarfonshire scores of men who have been deprived of their livelihood for speaking the truth ". (148)

Three of Blaenau's most prominent and respected radicals had paid the price of combination, a situation which gave some heart to the quarry owners, be they Liberals or Tories. At the quarterly meeting of the Ffestiniog Quarry Owners' Association held in November 1893 Mr. Armstrong of Maenofferen moved that " a hearty vote of thanks be given to Messrs. Greaves for the plucky way they had fought the battle in the matter of the strike". The motion was carried unanimously and Mr. Greaves thanked his fellow proprietors for the assistance they had rendered him. (149)

Following the return to work, D.G. Williams explained the defeat in terms of a lack of trust by the men in t~~he~~ strike committee, though he also went on to add that while 'many of the workers would do the honourable thing..... many others would need to be forced by a court of law before they would do their duty'. (150) The committee, however, appears to have been fairly efficie~~nt~~ in its operations and open in its decisions, mass meetings of the men were regularly held. What is surpr~~i~~sing is not the final defeat of the struggle but the fact that the men held out ^{for} so long, for the difficulties they faced were immense from the start.

" We have been too cowardly in the past. What is

needed is one little fight to show what was the situation of the two sides", . So spoke John Hughes early in the dispute (151), but this aggressive tone was untypical, for, in reality, the men had been on the defensive from the very first day, when Greaves had made it clear that he was not prepared to allow them back to work as a body. From that moment on the men's original grievances took second place, and it was clear that what was at stake was the threatened victimization of the leaders. The men were ill-prepared for such a struggle. Only a quarter of them were union members and there were other problems as well. The Llechwedd mine did not draw most of its labour from the town of Blaenau Ffestiniog itself, the workers at the mine were largely 'pobl y ffordd bell' (152) drawn from the surrounding villages of Llan Ffestiniog, Talsarnau, Trawsfynydd, Penrhyndeudraeth, Dolwyddelan, Llanfrothen, Bettws-y-Coed, Llanrwst etc., (153) all travelling to work daily by rail. The sense of a community united in struggle, so characteristic of disputes in Bethesda and Dinorwic, was thus largely absent, and there were considerable problems in organizing strikers scattered over such a wide area. (154) This problem was compounded, moreover, by the fact that all the other quarries in the area remained open, so the strikers were in daily touch with men still at work and earning; a situation which did not apply with the same force in the virtually one-quarry community of Bethesda.

Given these considerations the men's sixteen week struggle displayed considerable determination, a determination born of an outraged sense of justice. (155) The quarry remained idle throughout, and there were no

reports of strikers secretly seeking to be re-employed. Llechwedd's production for 1893 fell by a quarter (156) but this seems to have made little impression on the Greaves brothers. The family had owned the quarry since, in 1846, it had struck the highly profitable 'Old Vein', and they easily enough absorbed the disruption of production. The men had realised this from the start and had consequently put their trust in the justice of their case and the honour of those concerned. " The workers cannot stay out long without working ", explained John Hughes, " and Mr. Greaves can afford to keep the quarry closed for an extensive period. "But " , he asked, " would that be an honourable thing for him to do? ", (157) especially one could have added, for a Liberal. Greaves' sense of honour was not John Hughes' and Hughes and his two comrades were to be sacrificed before Mr. Greaves' code of honour was to be satisfied.

1. The Lock-Out at the Dinorwic Quarries. 1885-6.
1. C(aernarfon) R(ecord) O(ffice) DQ 2294.
The poet was Arabi Pasha.
2. The Dinorwic Quarry was bought and closed in 1969 by Penrhyn Quarries Ltd., making 200 men redundant. The National Museum of Wales now have a museum on the site.
For further information on this important quarry see Emyr Jones, Canrif y Chwarelwr, (1963); A.H. Dodd, The Industrial Revolution in North Wales, (1951); Jean Lindsay, A History of the North Wales Slate Industry, (1974)
3. Mining Journal. 10. 9. 1959.
4. GAS DQ 1560. Of a total of 783 men working in the Garret Department of Dinorwic in 1902 over one half came from Ebenezer (now Deiniolen), Dinorwic and Clwtybont. Fewer than 150 men came from over 10 miles distance, of whom 50 were from Anglesey, of these only 8 were skilled quarrymen.
506 of the 589 skilled men in the Department lived in the immediate vicinity of the quarry.
5. When he had also assumed the name Assheton Smith.

6. J.E. Vincent, The Land Question in North Wales
(1896), p. 273.
7. Justice.. 23. 1. 86.
8. The Lock-Out at the Dinorwic Quarries,
signed by the Strike Committee, Caernarfon 1885,
p.4. There certainly was bribery in the
quarry; the Dinorwic Quarry papers contain
an undated list of 15 men " who received
the £1. 0. 0. Mr.Assheton Smith for defending
him ".
Of the 15, ten were Anglicans, 5 Nonconformists.
9. ibid.
10. ibid.
11. ibid.
12. ibid.
13. ibid., p.5.
14. ibid.
15. ibid., p.6.
16. In 1882 the 2757 men at Dinorwic produced
87,429 tons of slate, in Penrhyn in the
same year 2809 men produced 116,116 tons.
(J.Lindsay op. cit., pp. 318, 328.)

17. Vivian's aims were revealed years later in a letter to Lord Penrhyn, 10. 11. 1902, in which he discloses that as a result of the closure of the quarry, " I was enabled... to carry out my scheme as to reorganising the Quarries, staff etc, and to start the Dinorwic Quarries afresh in 1886 under entirely changed conditions, regulations and staff ".
18. The Lock-Out., p.6.
19. Cofnodydd Penderfyniadau Pwyllgor y Gwaith Caebraichycaf, 5. 9. 84.
20. The Lock-Out, p.6.
21. Y Genedl Gymreig. 29. 7. 85.
22. The Lock-Out, p.6.
23. Y Genedl Gymreig, 29. 7. 85.
24. ibid.
25. ibid., 5. 8. 85.
26. The Lock-Out., p.6.
27. ibid.,
28. Y Genedl Gymreig, 19. 8. 85.
29. The Lock-Out, p.6.
30. ibid., pp 6 & 7.
31. Y Genedl Gymreig, 4. 11. 85.
32. The Lock-Out, p.4.
33. Y Genedl Gymreig, 19. 8. 85.
34. ibid., 29. 7. 85.
35. ibid.,
36. ibid., 4. 11. 85.
37. ibid., 11. 11. 85.
38. ibid., 4. 11. 85.
39. GAS. N(orth) W(ales) Q(uarrymen's) U(nion) Minute Book 26. 12. 85. £1427 was paid out per fortnight, the full rate of lock-out pay was 10/- a member.

240. Y Genedl Gymreig. 4. 11. 85.
241. C(aernarfon) and D(enbigh) H(erald), 6. 2. 86;
see also G.A.S. DQ 2275.
242. Y Genedl Gymreig, 16. 12. 85.
243. *ibid.*, 23. 12. 85.
244. C & D Herald. 2. 1. 86.
245. *ibid.*, 16. 1. 86.
246. Pall Mall Gazette, n.d. (UCNW Coetmor Mss
46 P.30.)
247. NWQU Minute Book, 23. 1. 86.
248. *ibid.*, 30. 1. 86; see also Caebraichycafn
Minute Book, 27. 1. 86.
249. C & D Herald, 13. 2. 86.
250. NWQU Minute Book, 13. 3. 86.
251. Y Genedl Gymreig, 16. 12. 85.
252. *ibid.*, 11. 11. 85.
253. There are two reports of the incident in
Y Genedl Gymreig 16. 12. 85.
254. Emyr Jones. *op. cit.*, p.33.
255. *ibid.*
256. GAS DQ 2276.
257. DQ 2286.
258. Y Genedl Gymreig, 16. 12. 85.
259. The Elidir was the mountain on which the
Quarries were situated.
260. C & D Herald, 2. 1. 86.
261. Y Genedl Gymreig, 30. 12. 85.
262. C & D Herald, 2. 1. 86.
263. *ibid.*
264. *ibid.*, 16. 1. 86.

65. DQ 1905. Letter from W.J.Parry to Hon.W.W.Vivian, 5. 12. 85. The two men exchanged 35 letters concerning the dispute and met at least five times, once in London, twice in Chester and twice in Portdinorwic.
66. C & D Herald, 23 . 1. 86. p.7.
67. ibid., p.7.
68. DQ 1905, Letter from W.J.Parry to W.W.Vivian 25. 1. 86..
69. ibid., 27. 1. 86..
70. C & D Herald, 23. 1. 86. p.4.
71. ibid., 30. 1. 86.
72. ibid., 23. 1. 86.
73. DQ 1905, Vivian to Parry 15. 2. 86.
74. C & D Herald, 30. 1. 86.
75. ibid., 20. 2. 86.
76. ibid., 30. 1. 86.
77. ibid., 20. 2. 86.
78. DQ 1905, Parry to Vivian 15. 2. 86.
79. C & D Herald, 20. 2. 86.
80. ibid., 27. 2. 86..
81. North Wales Observer and Express, 19. 2. 86.
82. Llyfr Cdnodion Cangen Dinorwic 20. 1. 88; 29. 4. 87; NWQU Minute Book, 4. 6. 87.
83. Young had been a London accountant who had previously been "entrusted with winding up many big limited liability concerns ".(DQ 2290)
84. DQ 2282.
85. Other than shooting, Assheton Smith also delighted in yachting and fishing and took an interest in the theatre and his private menagerie.

- .86. A hint of the difference in attitude between Smith and Vivian is to be found in Vivian's letter to Lord Penrhyn, November 1902:
 "previous to 1886 I found a so-called Quarry Committee in existence, some had been (more or less) recognised by Mr. Assheton Smith and his representatives. On my taking charge of the Quarries this so called committee and self clashed". Vivian's conduct during negotiations with deputations of the men was markedly different when Assheton Smith was present.
 (DQ 2332, 2356)
- .87. DQ 2339 - 2343; the information leaked, whether by Parry or not, was in any case fairly innocuous.
- .88. See, for example, DQ 2336, letter from M. Jones to W.W. Vivian 7. 6. 92; DQ 2317 letter from John Williams to W.W. Vivian, n.d.
- .89. See Owen Williams' eloquent letters to W.W. Vivian (DQ 2302 - 2306.)
- .90. DQ 2311, The Hon. W.W. Vivian and Owen Williams, Case.

2.) The Llechwedd Dispute.

- .91. Ffestiniog Urban District had a population of 11,073 in 1891, 11,435 in 1901.
Census Report, 1901.
- .92. Our Gazette (Nat. Assoc. of Slate Merchants and Slaters) Feb. 1895. p.32. A.M. Dunlop had originally been a Tory, fighting Merioneth in

- 1880 however he became a Liberal. (ibid., Feb. 1896 pp 98 - 99.)
93. Y Genedl Gymreig, 24. 2. 92. 9. 3. 92.
94. Slate Trade Gazette, Vol.VIII p. 229.
Other quarries in Ffestiniog employing over 100 men in 1893 were Cwmorthin, Graig Ddu, Diphwyr Casson(Lord), Rhosydd, Wrysgan.
95. Lord Penrhyn also contributed £5. GAS Tanybwllch D/UE2/21.
96. It is not clear what real control the NWQU as such had over this campaign.
97. NWQU Minute Book, 30. 10. 86.
98. There were clashes in Cwmorthin in 1882, 1883, 1885, 1890 and 1891.
99. GAS. Z/DAG 1 Votty and Bowydd Papers. 16. 4. 85.
100. NWQU Roll Book 1887 - 1891; NWQU Cash Book
In 1897 after much fluctuation membership rose to 928 before dropping drastically in 1899 and rising again in 1902.
101. Richard Griffiths of Ffestiniog claimed in 1903 that " a standing committee of members elected annually " and with power to appoint deputations had existed in the Oakeley for 15 years past and that the committee had " not failed to settle a dispute so much as once during that time ". Slate Trade Gazette, Vol IX p.45.
102. In December, 1902, Ciniawdy Sink y Mynydd sent a delegate to the general committee to argue for an increase in wages (U.C.N.W. 5440. Rhagfyr 1902.)

103. Though not with startlingly differing wage rates for, with some exceptions, those were generally agreed by the Ffestiniog and District Quarry Owners Association. See, for example, Quarry Owners Assoc. Minute Book. Nov. 1895 GAS BJC/H/41.) The Association generally followed the example set by the Oakeley mine. This uniformity in rates did not, of course, mean, given the wages structure of the industry, that men could not earn more in one quarry than in another.
104. Evidence to Departmental Committee upon Merionethshire Slate Mines, 1895; 3091.
105. NWQU Minute Book, 25. 6. 92.
106. *ibid.*, 26. 11. 92.
107. *ibid.*
108. Slate Trade Gazette Vol. VIII p. 229. Llechwedd produced approximately 20,000 tons of slate a year.
109. NWQU Minute Book. 3. 6. 93.
110. The men's original claim had apparently been 'warmly' received by Dunlop of Oakeley Quarry but received a cold reception from Greaves. (Y Genedl Gymreig, 1. 6. 92.)
111. Evidence of Departmental Committee upon Merionethshire Slate Mines. 1895; 3835.
112. Y Genedl Gymreig. 23. 5. 93.
113. *ibid.*
114. *ibid.*; A group of men came up for lunch a bit early and were stopped by a steward W. Jones (Ffestin-fab), while they were talking the bell rang but they were all suspended for the rest of the day. Another man was suspended for a week

- for leaving work nine minutes early.
115. ibid.,
116. ibid., 30. 5. 93.
117. The merits of the case are not clear, Jones
 claimed to have worked $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours while his
 partners had only worked $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Men, in fact,
 worked considerably longer hours than these.
118. Y Genedl Gymreig, 23. 5. 93.
119. ibid.,
120. ibid.,
121. The delegation consisted of D.G. Williams, a
 past President of the NWQU, John Hughes,
 Ellis Hughes a local councillor, Morgan Roberts
 and Edward Jones. (UCNW 5911 Rhan o Gofnodion
 am Streic y Llechwedd Blaenau Ffestiniog.)
 17. 5. 93.
122. ibid.,
123. ibid., 20. 5. 93., 3. 6. 93.
124. ibid., 13. 6. 93.
125. ibid., 4. 7. 93.
126. ibid., 9. 7. 93.
127. ibid., 11. 7. 93.
128. ibid., 26. 7. 93.
129. ibid., 2. 8. 93.
130. Y Genedl Gymreig, 4. 7. 93.
131. NWQU Minute Book, 12. 8. 93.
132. ibid., 22. 7. 93.
133. Rhan o Gofnodion etc., 14. 8. 93.
134. ibid., 26. 7. 93.
135. ibid., 7. 8. 93.
136. ibid., 29. 8. 93.
137. ibid., 19. 6. 93.

138. ibid., 2. 9. 93.
139. ibid., 4. 9. 93.
140. NWQU Minute Book, 30. 9. 93.
141. Y Genedl Gymreig, 9. 3. 92.
142. ibid., 11. 5. 92. Born the son of a quarryman
in Dolwyddelan in 1837 D.G. Williams started
work as a shep^herd at the age of nine, before
going to the Welsh Slate Company's mine when
he was 16 where, though considered too old
to master the craft, he became a skilled
quarryman. Williams was a keen eisteddfodwr
and an enthusiast for educational reform and
temperance, a Congregationalist 'his religion
and morality were a foundation to all his
striving'.
143. ibid., 15. 3. 93. He had then persuaded a
mass meeting to reject the original proposals
agreed to by the men's representatives.
144. Cambrian News, 21. 8. 1885. At the
independent Liberal candidate's adoption
meeting Williams had declared that " as a
Welshman he wished to see Wales governed by
Welshmen.. he should be very sorry to split
a party, but he preferred principle to party".
145. Y Genedl Gymreig, 24. 2. 92.
146. ibid., 9. 3. 93. He had stood in the Cynfal
ward.
147. Evidence of Departmental Committee of Inquiry..
1895 para. 344, 345. J.E. Greaves was one
of the committee's members.
148. ibid., 361.

149. Quarry Owner's Association Minute Book,
21. 11. 93. (GAS BJC Add. BJC/H/41.)
150. NWQU Minute Book, 30. 9. 93.
151. Y Genedl Gymreig. 30. 5. 93.
152. " people of the far road ".
153. Y Genedl Gymreig. 30. 5. 93.
154. On July 14th the strike committee had to send
a deputation to Penrhyndeudraeth " to keep
the peace and ensure order ". (Rhan o
Gofnodion. etc. 14. 7. 93.)
155. And, for some, of a wider perspective, " This
is the battle of labour against capital ",
stated Robert Pugh to a mass meeting during
the second week of the dispute.
(Y Genedl Gymreig. 30. 5. 93.)
156. Production in 1890 had been 21,324 tons, in
1893 it was 15,615 tons; (Slate Trade Gazette
Vol. VIII p.229. Report of Committee of
Inquiry 1895, Appendix V)
157. Y Genedl Gymreig. 30. 5. 93.

1. The Early Nineties.

" Hyn sydd yn sicr, fod y gweithwyr yn unfarn bron,
fod rhaid sefyll allan rhyw ddiwrnod, y
gwahaniaeth yw, pa bryd ? " (1)

(This much is certain, that the workers are almost
unanimous that there will have to be a strike one day,
the point is when ?)

Following George Douglas Pennant's (2) action in
1885 in unilaterally withdrawing from the 1874 Pennant
Lloyd agreement and replacing his manager Wyatt, shortly
afterwards, by E. A. Young, relations between management
and men at the Penrhyn Quarries had been bitter but
contained. Contained in large part by that disunity
amongst the men, caused by managerial promises and
threats, but engendered also by a general disillusion
with the N.W.Q.U., which had allowed Pennant to
introduce his fearsome changes.

The Caebraichycafn committee was not in a position
to negotiate with management for many years after 1885
and those years witnessed much heart searching and
recrimination. The lodge was actively involved in the
attempts during these years to amend the rules of the
unions and many differences of opinion as to the best
structure for the union became apparent. Loud as ever
were those voices calling for some kind of 'local'
union in the quarry and in 1889 a 'Local Fund' was in
fact launched with the proviso that

" if we have reforms in the N.W.Q.U, and those
meet our wishes, we shall fall in with it; if it
does not do this, we shall continue as a local
fund". (3)

In April 1889 the Penrhyn Lodge had presented a gloomy report to the N.W.Q.U. council, " we have at present been hit by a wave of failure", explained the No.2 Lodge delegate, " would it not be better to give up the union ?". (4) Three months later, in a reference to the split in the ranks caused by the Local Fund, the delegate's report was even more desperate, " we must do something ", he said, " the union has been torn apart by a barefaced enemy - everyone feels that something must now be done. We have asked for the very least that we could ask for and we have been refused." (5) In October their plight was the same,

" we live in wretchedness still in the Cae...

great complaints, working only five days". (6)

The situation was changing however, the slate market showed signs of stirring once again and in January 1890 the N.W.Q.U. itself accepted new rules which greatly enhanced the local autonomy of the lodges. (7) In May the union conference expressed its considered opinion that the time had arrived for a united push for an increase in wages. (8) And in the same months the Penrhyn delegate hit a note of restrained optimism by calling for a public meeting in Bethesda as " it seems as if things will change there". (9)

Following the changes in the N.W.Q.U. rules negotiations started between the committees of the No.2 Lodge and of the Local Fund breakaway. Despite many difficulties and objections from the Fund leaders the question of which body was to represent ^{the} Penrhyn men was put to a ballot in July; the result was an overwhelming vote of confidence in the union. (10)

By July 1890 therefore the men were in a healthier position than they had been since 1885 to "start up the union again". (11) The lodge was quickly re-activated and grievances were discussed and demands formulated. The men were restless for change and some chafed at the more considered pace of the lodge committee; in early September four galleries threatened to strike in protest at management interfering with holiday customs. (12)

The committee prevented the strike but protested strongly against "the way we are being treated" by the management. (13)

In October the lodge, now with over 1,600 members, pressed the N.W.Q.U. to hold an emergency conference to discuss united action on wages, hours and conditions. (14) The union council agreed and a conference was held in Caernarfon on December 13th with 81 delegates from eleven lodges present, each delegate representing 100 men. W. H. Williams of Bethesda addressed the conference on "The State of the Quarryman"; "our situation as quarrymen", he said, "is totally unsatisfactory; we are not receiving those advantages which we should from the enlivening of the market". D. Williams of Ffestiniog, speaking about the level of wages, concurred but went further than W. H. Williams by proposing that an united move should be made to raise the standard of wages to 5/- a day for quarrymen; the planning of such a move, he proposed, should be left to the union council. Williams' proposals for action were accepted. (15)

The conference's decisions were endorsed by a mass meeting of the Penrhyn men in February (16) and several demands were formulated for presentation to the management. (17) The struggle was approached with seriousness; a request from Dinorwic quarry for a joint claim was turned down, it being thought that this would weaken their case, all the men signed a bond pledging them to the claim, and all those who did not sign had their names taken and reported to the Lodge. (18) A meeting of the lodge's negotiators with the works manager, D. Pritchard, bore no fruit and neither did the meeting with the manager E. A. Young a fortnight later. (19)

The men therefore determined to take their demands to Lord Penrhyn himself, and many galleries threatened to strike until such a meeting took place. (20) On the 20th of August Lord Penrhyn met the deputation but little discussion of the men's claims took place since much of the time was taken up by an accusation of dishonesty levelled by Lord Penrhyn at the committee's secretary, W. R. Evans. Evans was presented with a document of "apology" which he had to sign or be sacked. Such an atmosphere was not conducive to any meaningful negotiations. (21)

The failure of the negotiations was reported back to the men and a strike seemed a very real possibility; the N.W.Q.U. had earlier warned sternly against any strike action in Penrhyn and had forbidden a meeting to be held independently of the committee. (22) In the event the men, under the committee's guidance, appear to have agreed that there was little they could do other than

" to take the present conditions we are in and present them before God in prayer". (23)

A further deputation was organised to meet the management in April 1892 (24) and they held a barren meeting with E.A.Young on May 23rd. (25)

In June the men voted 1,567 to 327 in favour of strike action, in the event of their negotiations failing to make headway, but this vote had been taken in the belief that all North Wales' quarrymen would strike together; (26) when it became apparent that the N.W.Q.U. was not about to organise an industry-wide stoppage the Penrhyn men decided first for arbitration, (27) and then to accept once again that " the time has not arrived for us to strike ". (28)

The continuing rebuffs rendered their efforts demoralised the lodge and it was with difficulty that a chairman was found for the committee, when that post became vacant in December. (29) But there was still considerable pressure for an increase and in February 1893 a motion calling for a strike the coming April was only headed off by a motion which called for the postponement of such action until certain changes of rule had taken place in the N.W.Q.U. (30) Membership in the quarry increased with the growing scent of confrontation but an attempt to introduce a strike motion in March was again headed off, this time by a motion calling on the N.W.Q.U. council to organise any action. (31) But leadership on this issue was not forthcoming and the stalling led to demoralisation; by May, 27 galleries in Penrhyn were still eager to pursue their claim, but the men generally were not as united as they had been;

a disunity caused, it was felt, by the setting agent's control of the wages system leading to a tactical variation in the wage rates of different crews; " the management has succeeded in dividing us ", reported the Bethesda delegate to the N.W.Q.U. (32)

The opportunity for mobilisation had passed but the committee went on, to very little effect, to hold several meetings with E.A.Young and eventually met Lord Penrhyn again on 30th June. The men's deputation appears to have been thrown by Penrhyn's aggressive manner during the meeting and some contradictory statements regarding the 5/- standard were made. Penrhyn exploited these inconsistencies fully in a mocking statement on the meeting which he sent to his employees. His own position was made quite clear;

" you shall have a rise of wages whenever it is warranted by the state of the slate trade...

there is no necessity for my being asked for a rise, I will always consider your interests".

As evidence of this he pointed out the two rises of 5% he had made to certain classes of workmen since 1891, rises which did not coincide with any claim or demand made by the men.

Despite good organisation and support in the quarry since 1890 the lodge had failed to make any impression on Penrhyn's opposition to real negotiations with them indeed they seemed only to have aroused his spleen. With failure seeming to be the only fruit borne by their efforts the lodge, and the N.W.Q.U. generally, entered another period of self-examination and doubt about the purpose of their existing as an organisation.

There were fears that the membership fee would be too high to retain what members remained through a lean period of little promise: " better that many should pay 6d than a few 1/-" argued H.H.Davies in a lodge meeting in September 1893. W.H.Williams, however, had different perspectives, arguing that financial concerns were not the main reason for loss of membership and that 1/- a month should therefore remain the membership fee: he must also have terrified some of the 6d-a-month camp by suggesting that 2/- a week should be levied if any members were on strike. His argument was based on a belief that the men would soon enough return to membership, whatever the fee;

" we will not have to wait more than a year before we shall see the workers coming back again to be unionists. It is certain that our law-makers will make our places so hot and intolerable that the Union will once again be our only refuge ".(34) Events were to make his time-scale appear optimistic but were also to underwrite his sense of the inevitable, impending crisis.

The years that followed the raised expectations and the dashed hopes of 1890 - 93 were as lean as those which had followed the defeat of 1885. In January 1894 a ballot of the men in the quarry showed 800 still willing to support the union, with 180 against; but the majority had not voted at all. (35) By May 1895 some were voicing the opinion that " the best medicine would be to give up the union " , (36) while by September of that year,

" though no one could see a clear vision, some friends thought that a dawn was about to break

and there was but need to wait a little to see it ". (37)

The union during these three years seems only to have survived in the committee's limited activity and there was no attempt to mobilise the men or to negotiate with management. The lodge complained about the appointment of Slate Inspectors, (38) protested about the rates of pay of the Borough Council's employees (39) and actively argued for the appointment of a full-time organiser for the union, a position filled by D.R. Daniel in January 1896. (40) In April 1894 the lodge had also condemned, without being in a position to do anything more, the spread of large contracts in the quarry: " how long ", it was asked, " are we as trade unionists going to allow the 'Big Contracts' to be taken without our protesting against them ? , according to the talk these days (contracts) are increasing in our midst and there is a danger that many will be thrown upon the tender mercies of the contractors ". (41)

As the dawn, prophesied in September 1895 began to break in the New Year the issue of the "big contracts" first raised by the lodge in 1894 was to be the angry sun that dispersed the clouds. By February the lodge were in a position to hold a mass meeting in Bethesda; (42) on March 15 they received a letter from the General Secretary of the N.W.Q.U. , W.J. Williams informing them that 1,600 had joined the union in Dinorwic and enquiring how things were in Bethesda. (43) His answer was not long coming.

2. The Principle of Combination.

Six months after he had been appointed full time organiser for the N.W.Q.U. in January 1896, D.R. Daniel

was asked by a member of the union's council whether he was

" ready to do battle with the masters on the principle of Union, whatever the consequences." (44)

The questioner was thinking of the tense situation then obtaining in the Penrhyn Quarries where a conflict between master and men was daily appearing more likely.

The crisis finally came to a head at the end of September; on the 28th the men voted overwhelmingly to prepare for a strike in March 1897, that same afternoon 71 men, including all 57 members of the men's committee, were suspended from their employment from the following evening. The men stopped work and at a mass meeting on the 30th passed a resolution:

" That we, as workmen at Caebraichycafn, consider that we are today out of work on the all-important question of the right of workmen to unite together to act through a committee and deputation to secure their just and reasonable rights, and we trust that all working-men throughout the country will stand by us in the fight". (45)

They returned to work eleven months later on the 25th of August, 1897.

Early 1896 had witnessed a re-awakening of union activity in the quarry and in April it had been decided that the men should, as a body, attend the Labour Day demonstration in Blaenau Ffestiniog on May 4th. The Gwyl Lafur (Labour Day) had been introduced by the union in 1891 to co-incide with the union's annual conference. It had originally been intended that the first of May (46) should be the date for the festival

but it in fact took place in the first week of May.

The first Gwyl Lafur, held in Caernarfon in 1892 had been a grand affair with Sir. John Gorst M.P. and William Abraham M.P. as guests of honour: the men " marched through the town, bands leading the sections from the different lodges. No such procession has ever been seen in Caernarfon, indeed anything similar." (47)

It is far from clear who took the decision to inform the management that the Penrhyn men were to take the day off to attend the Ffestiniog demonstration in 1896. Penrhyn was to claim that it was organised by the committee and that members of the committee went round the men with a book persuading them " to sign not to work on May 4th ". (48) The committee denied this and argued that leave on the Gwyl Lafur was an established custom and that the men themselves were determined to attend. Whatever the degree of union involvement in organising for the Gwyl Llafur, and it must have been considerable, it was the committee itself that put in an application for leave on behalf of the men rather than each man applying individually. There was no mistaking the meaning of such a move: here was the principle of combination, of the committee acting on behalf of the men collectively, re-introducing itself into relations with the management .

E. A. Young refused to accept the collective application for leave and demanded that each man apply individually. This was rejected and a deputation visited the manager to inform him that the men were to attend the Gwyl Llafur. On May 4th 2,500 men stayed away from work though it is not clear how many of them in fact travelled to Blaenau Ffestiniog.

When they returned to the quarry the next day they were informed that they were all suspended for two days. The men held a mass meeting that afternoon when they protested against the closure of the quarry: sensing the approach of battle the meeting also urged

" all the workmen to join the Union as the only effective means to secure our just rights " and called upon " the workmen at Caebraichycafn (to) bind themselves to keep united in whatever course is decided upon". (49)

Feeling was running high following the Gwyl Llafur incident, union membership grew rapidly and it was reported in mid-July that virtually all the workers in the quarry were union members.(50) The committee, feeling support growing amongst the men, carefully formulated a series of demands to put to the management. The initial demand was for a general increase in wages with 5/6 a day being the standard wage for quarrymen, miners etc, and

" to have, when they fail to reach the standard on the letting, 4/6 a day; and that other classes are to follow in the same ratio"; particular demands were also made on behalf of rybelwrs, mill and yard workers, stonemasons and apprentices.(51)

These demands were presented to E.A. Young on July 1st and turned down by him on the 29th of that month with the explanation that he was unable to grant a rise as " the cost of production has risen". Following this rejection the committee determined to present their case to Lord Penrhyn himself and on August 7th a document listing grievances and demands was sent to him: the issue of the letting of large

contracts in the quarry being the main complaint. (52)

There then followed a period of fruitless negotiations and of charge and counter charge. A voluminous and hugely detailed correspondence passed between the committee and Young regarding the particulars of grievances and the form of the negotiations to be held. A deputation met Penrhyn on August 17th when they were subjected to a lengthy reply to their demands before any discussion could take place. On August 26th the men dispatched another detailed document to Penrhyn and it was clear that much was to depend upon the nature of his reply, for the quarrymen were determined that this time they should be taken seriously.

" I am very much afraid that it is more than probable work will cease at the Penrhyn Quarries on Tuesday week", (53) wrote E.A.Young on August 22 and 53 districts had in fact voted to strike from the beginning of the ~~following~~ quarry month. (54) They were only dissuaded by a letter from Young promising that the claims made would be " looked into carefully by his lordship" and by a request from the council of the N.W.Q.U. that they await Penrhyn's reply before striking. (55)

The length and detail of Penrhyn's document (56), released on September 25, did not disguise his rejection of all the men's demands. With the men already in a mood to " get their demands whatever happens" (57) confrontation now seemed inevitable. The men had been further infuriated by the suspension of two men, Robert Owen and David Davies who were to be disciplined for carrying out some unauthorised measuring in the quarry to substantiate the committee's claims. They had been summoned to appear before the manager but refused to

do so on the principle that the management should discuss the matter with their representatives, the committee. They were suspended for disobedience on September 14th. (58)

The committee met on September 26 to discuss Penrhyn's rejection of their claims and on the 28th presented three resolutions to all the galleries in the quarry. The first resolution stated that

" we believe that it is our duty as workmen to announce that it is our intention to strike in March next if we don't see in the meantime that the principle points in our demands and complaints as different classes in the works have been granted "; the second resolution called for the intervention of the Board of Trade under the terms of the Conciliation Act 1896, and the third called for a strike ballot throughout North Wales in preparation for a March strike. The resolutions were approved by 33 districts, two were doubtful and 13 were for an immediate strike. (59)

The committee clearly hoped that the matter could be resolved before March; the promise of strike action to come being the only way they could pacify those demanding immediate action. The resolutions had been taken to the districts rather than being presented to a mass meeting because the committee feared that the enthusiasm generated by such a meeting could cause caution to be thrown to the winds and an immediate strike to be declared. (60) But there were positive reasons for delay as well: William Williams of Ffestiniog a delegate to the N.W.Q.U. Council, had warned the Penrhyn

men not to come out until March as they would not then have to suffer through the cold weather; (61) more important, the delay would have given the N.W.Q.U. time to build a strike fund which would have enabled the men better to withstand a long dispute and, perhaps most significant of all, they could have come out, according to Lord Penrhyn

" at a time when they... thought that the greatest amount of injury could be inflicted upon the employer with the least harm to themselves, but at the cost of the disorganisation of the slate trade and the many industries connected therewith, at the commencement of the busiest season of the year ". (62)

In the event the committee's calculations came to nought for when news of the men's decision taken at lunchtime on Monday September 28th reached Young and Penrhyn they reacted swiftly. That same afternoon some 50 men were interviewed individually and shortly before work finished for the day 57 members of the committee and 17 other men had been handed a note which read:

" I have to inform you that you are hereby suspended until further notice as and from the end of this quarry month, viz Tuesday night, 29th inst, E. A. Young".

The news " spread like a thunderbolt through the quarry" and the quarrymen met for a mass meeting in a field behind Bethania chapel. The 3,000 men burned copies of pro-Penrhyn newspapers and sang hymns (64) before they resolved that " it is our duty as workmen to cease work until we have received an explanation" for the suspensions

and " that unless this explanation is given no-one is to take his bargain for next month tomorrow ". (65)

The men went to the quarry on Tuesday morning to receive Penrhyn's explanation for the suspensions. None came, and the month's bargains were not taken; in the afternoon Young circulated a terse note

" that all the men who have refused to take their bargains to-day have to remove their tools, etc., this afternoon ".

The men met again on Wednesday morning and declared themselves on strike

" on the all-important question of the right of workmen to unite together to act through a committee and deputation to secure their just and reasonable rights ". (66)

W. Williams, Gerlan, one of the suspended 71 warned that they " may have to be out for a long time - possibly for years " while David Davies, Penybryn, also suspended, saw " the Red Sea - the winter - in front of us and the Egyptians - capital - in pursuit ". Another speaker, John Williams, Brynmeurig, praised the young quarrymen, " fair play to the boys", he said, " if it had not been for the old men they would have been out years ago ". (67) And then the three thousand sang " O Fryniau Caersalem" and " O Arglwydd Dduw, Rhagluniaeth " ::

" Yng ngwyneb pob caledi, y sydd neu eto ddaw, dod gadarn gymorth imi i lechu yn Dy law ". (68)

(From the hills of Jerusalem, Lord God of Providence; In the face of all suffering, that is or is yet to come; give me stern support to shelter in Your Hand).

3. The Strike.

Within a week of the men coming out two sergeants from the 23rd Division of the Royal Welch Fusilliers visited Bethesda on a recruiting venture but they met, apparently, with no success. (69) There was a demand for slate and many men immediately found work in neighbouring quarries and on local projects such as the Snowdon Mountain railway; others travelled to Lleyrn for work in the granite quarries and within a couple of days hundreds of men had also left for Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff, Aberdare, Neath and Aberafan in South Wales and for Manchester, Liverpool and North Staffs; some made plans to emigrate to Western Australia and South Africa. No-one expected a speedy end to the dispute and few were left in Bethesda in their second-best suits, they were labouring in strange quarries, in coal mines, docks and brickworks, throughout Wales and the North West of England; (70) by November 1340 of the men were working away from home.

The financial state of the N.W.Q.U. was parlous, the coffers having remained empty after the crippling expense of the five-month Dinorwic lock-out ten years earlier; (72) a levy was not raised on the membership but collections were organised in the other slate quarries. In the first two weeks of October large solidarity meetings were held in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Waenfawr, Talysarn, and Penrhyndeudraeth, (73) fund-raising concerts by local musicians were held in Llanberis and Nantlle and a large meeting organised in Llanberis in early November. (74)

Leaders of the Bethesda men addressed those and other meetings (75) and a 3d pamphlet explaining the men's case was being distributed by November. (76)

£250 came from Llanberis, (77) and £65 from Blaenau Ffestiniog (78) and the people of Blaenau were thanked in December for their " ready kindness... to the quarrymen of Bethesda ". (79)

Despite this support from the quarrymen of other areas, however, the N.W.Q.U. noted in January 1897 that

" more money was coming from outside than from the quarrymen for Bethesda ". (80)

A farmer from Llanfaglan gave the men a ton of potatoes, (81) but above all support flooded in from the trade union movement: Manchester printers sent £10, (82) coal miners from Rhosllanerchrugog £56 (83) (in 1893 the Bethesda men had collected £46 for miners on strike in Rhosllanerchrugog and Coedpoeth) (84), Liverpool building workers levied their members to raise funds (85) and Liverpool Trades Council lent their solidarity to the struggle in Bethesda: (86) £150 came from a teacher's conference in June 1897. (87) But it was the enthusiastic intervention of the Daily Chronicle that really made the cause of Caebraichycaf n a national crusade: the fund they established collected over £7,500. (88)

Bethesda was divided into 22 districts for the purpose of distributing relief (89) and a local committee made up of quarrymen and tradesmen was established to oversee the collection and distribution of funds. (90) Tours by chqirs from the strike bound town raised £2,400 and a further £5,800 came from general subscriptions and collections; in all £19,161. 19. 7d was collected all over Britain for the sustenance of the struggle in Bethesda. (91)

The Penrhyn Quarries opened for work on four occasions - November 24, 1896, January 13, February 8 and April 2, 1897;

no-one, however, turned up for work and the threat of blackleg labour from outside was the least of the committee's worries. A few men had continued working after the start of the strike but they were not quarrymen and their presence was no threat (92) though it did create some friction and there was at least one incident when a group of some 60 men and boys harried them on their way to the quarry. (93) There was also a threat of action from Bethesda's women early in the dispute when there was a suspicion that loaders from Port Penrhyn were to come and remove slates from the quarry.

" Let them come, and if you men do not send them back quicker than they came, then we, the women, will do that instead of you, you will see ", (94) was one woman's reported response. But incidents of this sort were not a feature of the dispute and when the allegation was made that strikers had placed rocks on the railway line between the Quarry and Port Penrhyn, W.H. Williams' condemnation was swift and surprisingly absolute:: " The quarrymen of Bethesda are not ruffians", he declared, " but men ready to give the same justice to their masters as they expect to receive themselves,

If they refused to work themselves they should recognise the right of the masters to employ others.. the quarry belonged to Lord Penrhyn and he had the right to do what he would with it." And, he added characteristically,

" it is better to lose the battle than to win through unfair means. " (95)

Such an attitude was possible, because there was no threat of outside labour seriously affecting the course

of the dispute; the rocks of Caebraichycafn could be worked effectively only by those who had learnt their intimacies after many years of labour, that is by the men who were on strike. Some blacklegs might come, a member of the committee thought in December,

" but as far as them being people who could do the work of the quarryman, the hard-rockman and others, that is out of the question ".(96)

The quarrymen were protected by their particular craft. Except, of course, against themselves. If they remained united they could also remain confident that the quarry would not work; but if they split under the strain then the perspective would change completely.

Stressing the importance, and working for the maintenance, of unity thus became one of the committee's main tasks and a significant object of their rhetoric.

" The only danger is dissension within our ranks," stressed W.H.Williams, "It would be possible to bring a divided Bethesda to destruction, but it would never be possible to destroy the quarrymen as an united body, there was no one else who could do the work. Let us therefore be united, faithful and determined. " (97)

Dissension there may have been but there was no split in the ranks and the men remained united throughout the eleven months.

While there was no need for any picketing or other forceful activity therefore to maintain the men's position there were a few minor incidents in April and May 1897 which caused concern in some quarters. E.A.Young wrote to the Chief Constable, Colonel Ruck, pleading for mounted police to be drafted into the area as

" the aspect of affairs at Bethesda... is becoming more riotous" (98) though his evidence for such a claim was somewhat impressionistic: on a bicycle trip he had noticed that " some of the men near Bethesda were very sullen" while some strikers working in Llandudno Junction had seen fit to shout at him as he rode by: more alarmingly he reported that when his name had been mentioned at a mass meeting there had been calls of " shoot him" and " kill him" while a Welsh newspaper had printed the suggestion that his teeth be knocked out and a knife be stuck in his bowels. Despite Mr. Young's fears, however, actual acts of violence were few: workmen's cupboards in the Quarry were interfered with while the foreman's hut near the slate mill was smashed up, and in early May Hugh Jones, a carpenter still at work in the quarry, was attacked by a group of young men while Richard Hughes, a contractor, had been harassed and pestered in the streets of Bethesda. Following these incidents a somewhat paranoic Young had written begging Ruck to send police re-inforcements to the area, (99) but these were isolated cases:: the men had no need of any campaign of intimidation.

4. Negotiations and Settlement.

The negotiations that took place during the course of the dispute were as tortuous and barren as those that had preceded the stoppage. (100) The men were hopeful that under the Conciliation Act's provision for the intervention of the Board of Trade in industrial disputes pressure could be brought on Penrhyn to negotiate and settle.

Early in October, Sir. Courtenay Boyle, Secretary of the Board of Trade, wrote to Lord Penrhyn suggesting a meeting with a deputation of the men and a representative of the Board. An exhaustive three-cornered correspondence ensued in which Lord Penrhyn's adamant though circumspectly phrased opposition to any "interference" by an outside body became the increasingly formidable obstacle. On December 9th he wrote to Boyle that,

" with regard to the suggestion contained in the second resolution that a Board of Trade official should attend at the first interview whilst I thank you for having expressed your readiness to meet ⁱⁿ my convenience on the subject, I must reply, with all due respect, beg to decline to comply with such a suggestion, as my acceptance of it would establish a precedent for outside interference with the management of my private affairs ". (101)

To which an obviously angry and frustrated Boyle replied that

" the Board cannot admit that the settlement of a prolonged dispute affecting some thousands of men and their families can be rightly regarded as a matter of private interest only". (102)

Penrhyn and the Board of Trade clashed also over the definition of what meaningful negotiations entailed and over the question of supplying Penrhyn with copies of correspondence from the men. On the 28th of December Penrhyn made plain his "absolute conviction that the dispute is more likely to be prolonged than curtailed by the continuance of negotiations with the Department" and the Board of Trade withdrew from the business defeated and powerless against Penrhyn's convictions:

"The Board of Trade made an endeavour to promote a friendly conference between yourself and your workmen... the conditions, however, upon which you insist make it useless for them to continue the endeavour." (103)

"Tear up your Conciliation Act", concluded the Liberals in Parliament, "it is not worth the paper it is printed on". (104)

In February a new initiative to get the two sides together was launched this time with the intervention of C.Ritchie the President of the Board of Trade himself and, though Penrhyn rebuked him for suggesting that his intervention was in any way necessary, (105) this new initiative finally bore fruit in a meeting held on March 18th between, on the one hand, Lord Penrhyn, the Hon.E.S.Douglas-Pennant M.P., and E.A.Young and on the other W.H.Williams, Robert Davies and Henry Jones. (106)

W.H.Williams argued the men's case forcefully and effectively during the meeting but Penrhyn refused to admit the validity of his arguments over the right to combine effectively and the meeting ended with no agreement. "We have held out for six months against this," Williams told Penrhyn, "and we intend holding out again for some time... we have no inclination to give in for some time yet. We shall press still more, until we are even in want of bread, before we shall give in on the question of combination, and that is not likely to be accomplished for some months". (107)

There were no further meetings between the two sides until the same deputation met E.A.Young on May 13th; as a result of this and further meetings a set of proposals presented by Young was put to a meeting of the men on

May 29th and unanimously rejected.

The final settlement was reached in mysterious circumstances which left a pall of betrayal over the struggle. W. Parry in his otherwise meticulous description of the negotiations gives hardly a sentence in explanation of the circumstances which led to a resumption of work merely stating that

" early in August 1897 negotiations were again opened with Lord Penrhyn through Mr. Lloyd Carter, a member of the firm of solicitors acting for his lordship. Eventually, on the 18th of that month, the following terms were agreed upon and signed." (108)

There is no doubt that Parry, and perhaps more important the General Secretary of the N.W.Q.U., W. J. Williams, secretly manouvered the committee into the settlement; Williams unilaterally and secretly wrote to Lloyd Carter on July 6th without the committee's knowledge and according to the deputation (W. H. Williams, Robert Davies and Henry Jones) and D. R. Daniel this left them in an impossible situation for, in their own strong and angry words,

" The evil of individual action of the kind undertaken in this case on his own initiative, and on his own responsibility by Mr. W. V. Williams without any consultation with or intimation to any of his colleagues, the men's authorised representatives, is now apparent, inasmuch as it produced in Lord Penrhyn's mind several erroneous impressions, every one of which was destructive to the men's hopes of securing satisfactory terms of settlement ". (109)

Chief amongst the " erroneous impressions" made by W.J.Williams was

" that the men felt their case to be so hopeless that they were on the point of surrendering at discretion, whereas, as a matter of fact, they were never more determined to insist upon the concession of the terms laid down by them after the last interview we had with Mr.Young in May ".

Even in this difficult situation the committee hesitated before agreeing terms for, according to the account of the negotiations given by Lloyd Carter the men refused to accept the settlement for a week as they were going to London to see Tom Ellis M.P. and the T.U.C., presumably with the intention of discussing the possibility of continuing the dispute. W.J.Williams and Carter " thereupon decided to ask a number of local Liberals to write to Tom Ellis with the object of influencing Mr.Ellis to advise the leaders to bring the strike to a close ". (110) It was with some justification therefore that W.H.Williams and the other Bethesda men felt that the agreement had been reached behind their backs.

The terms of the settlement were:

- 1.(a) The grievances of any employee, crew, or class shall be submitted by him of them in the first instance to the Local Manager. If dissatisfied with the decision of the Local Manager, then the said grievances shall be submitted to the Chief Manager either personally or by deputation appointed in such manner as the workmen may deem advisable, but to consist of not more than five (5) employees

selected from the same class as the person or persons aggrieved who must be included in the deputation.

- (b) Grievances in which the employees generally are interested or which they may adopt on behalf of an employee, crew, or class who have submitted their grievances under the preceding clause and are dissatisfied can again be submitted to the Chief Manager by a deputation consisting of not more than six (6) employees appointed in such manner as the workmen may deem advisable.
- (c) Finally in a similar manner in all cases of importance an appeal may be made to Lord Penrhyn either by the individual or by a deputation, against the decision of the Chief Manager, the grounds of such appeal shall in all cases be first submitted to his Lordship in writing.
2. Suitable Rybelwr will be given Monthly Bargains without delay as soon as the Management find it practicable.
3. The letting of contracts to be left in the hands of the Management who engage all persons employed thereon and see that each employee received his just ratio of wage.
4. Previous to the cessation of work the average wage paid to the Quarrymen was 5/6d per day, other piece work classes being in proportion, (viz: Badrockmen 4/7d and Labourers 3/7d); when work is resumed this same basis will be continued so long as trade permits.
5. All the late employees who desire work in the Penrhyn Quarry will be readmitted in a body as far as it is practicable, and the remainder as soon as work can be arranged for them. Reasonable time being allowed to those who may now be employed at a distance.

It is difficult not to concur with E.A.Young's judgement of the settlement as " being a complete victory on every point ". (111) " The terms now agreed upon", he wrote to J.Menzies,

" are precisely similar to the conditions in force not only immediately previous to the strike but for the whole of the last 12 years ever since Lord Penrhyn took charge of Quarry Affairs in May 1885 ". (112)

The terms were put before a mass meeting of the men on August 21st and upon hearing an assurance from Mr.Lloyd Carter that " there was to be no black-list" they were accepted. (113) The men returned to work on August 25th. William R. Evans, a member of the committee exclaimed that " we have fought such a battle as to make us deserve 40 years of peace henceforth". (114) But E.A.Young was not wholly confident, despite his victory, " I have no doubt", he wrote, " .. the result of such a beating will be a lesson to them to be content in future when they are well off, but unfortunately, they never seem to realise when they are well off ". (115)

5. The Aftermath.

The settlement arrived at in August 1897 had far reaching effects both on internal affairs in the Penrhyn Quarries and within the N.W.Q.U. Throughout the dispute the two most prominent spokesmen for the quarrymen had been W.H.Williams and D.R.Daniel and following 1897 they were to become the powerful figures in the N.W.Q.U. itself. W.V.Williams' interference in the final settlement arrangements sealed his fate as a quarrymen's leader.

He had never been popular and there had been consistent complaints about his behaviour for years: (116) now feelings against him hardened. A special congress of the union held in Caernarfon on August 28th, only a few days after the resumption of work in Penrhyn, witnessed a lengthy discussion of a scheme, proposed by the Ffestiniog Lodge, to do away with the new post of Organiser (then held by D.R. Daniel) and merge the office with that of General Secretary (then W.J. Williams) and create a new post of Financial Secretary. The intention of the scheme was clear to everyone since it was not envisaged that Daniel would lose his position:

" there is here a plan to uproot an old official, let there be no mistake about that" said one speaker at the meeting. (117) Despite there being a majority for the proposals at the conference the matter was finally postponed until September 25th by which time delegates could sound out feelings in their respective quarries.

Caebraichycafn quarrymen were overwhelmingly in favour of the change with 36 districts for and 9 against (118) and the second conference accepted, in principle, the new rules despite W.J. Williams' statement that he was not prepared to work under a younger and less experienced man; " if you want to get rid of me, it would be better if you said that openly " (119) said Williams and at the next union council meeting the Bethesda delegates did bring the matter into the open. Williams asked them how things stood between himself and the Caebraichycafn quarrymen's deputation; the deputation, he was told, could not trust him and refused to work with him. (120)

Under the new rules accepted by the September conference the new post of Financial Secretary was created and nominations for this post closed on December 11th. There were three contestants, J.E. Williams from Llanberis, D.Ll. Humphreys from Blaenau Ffestiniog and W.H. Williams of Caebraichycafn. In the ensuing ballot Williams' victory was overwhelming, receiving 3,065 of the 3865 votes cast. (121) His victory was assured by the Caebraichycafn vote for the lodge was now by far the biggest in the union, and he received 1,925 out of the 1,978 votes cast in his home quarry. But his popularity was high through all the quarries and he topped the poll in all but two of the union's 13 lodges even defeating Humphreys and J.E. Williams in their own lodges. (122)

Following W.J. Williams' departure from office the union headquarters moved to new premises at 1, Turf Square, Caernarfon. The fact that W.J. Williams had run the union from the same rooms as his own Chartered Accountant and Estate Agents business (123) had long been a source of discontent among union members: after his departure more serious charges of financial irregularities were levelled against him and the summer months of 1898 were soured by bitter wrangling between the N.W.Q.U. Council and its former General Secretary. It became apparent that certain monies belonging to the union were in a special personal account in the ex-General Secretary's name. (124) On August 22 Williams agreed, on certain conditions, to transfer this money to the union fund but six weeks later D.R. Daniel wrote again asking "in the kindest possible way" for Williams to return the money since

"the Council would very much regret being forced to take any further steps to get you to transfer..

all the money and books in your possession which belong to the Union ". (125)

W.J.Williams did not have long to live and the union's reticence in pursuing the matter may have owed as much to their respect for his condition as to their understandable desire to avoid damaging publicity. The end of W.J.Williams' reign was followed very shortly by W.J.Parry's severing of all formal relationships with the union when he resigned his position as union " mediator" in July 1898. (126) He too had been a casualty of the 1897 settlement and it is clear that W.H.Williams and the other Bethesda men were deeply suspicious of his behind-the-scenes role during August 1897 and resented him for his eagerness in seeking a settlement and for spreading in July the prophecy that it " was certain our ranks would be broken in pieces before a fortnight", a view bitterly opposed by W.H.Williams. (127) Parry was already so unpopular with the Bethesda committee that according to Lloyd Carter, he failed to secure a meeting between the men and himself in 1897 (128) " as the leaders would not have anything to do with him ". Carter also alleged that Parry's conciliatory approach during the dispute was at least partly motivated by a desire to win back " the explosive monopoly which he had held previous to the year 1892 ". A wish which E.A.Young did not grant.

W.J.Williams did not live long after the 1897 settlement and W.J.Parry was later said to have remarked that he had " not the slightest doubt that the worry of the strike of 1896 - 7 and the ungrateful treatment which Mr.W.J.Williams received shortened his life". (130) Parry's own relationship with the union was, by that

time, tenuous nevertheless his and Williams' removal from any positions of influence within the union signified a major change in the N.W.Q.U. and was a direct result of the 1896-97 battle and of the way in which the settlement was arrived at.

In 1898 the N.W.Q.U. had, for the first time ever, two full-time officials who had no employment other than their union work; one of them, moreover, was himself a quarryman with his roots in the poisonous conflicts of the Penrhyn Quarries. The union they found themselves in charge of, however, was weak and desperately depleted.

In 1897 membership had been 6,611, (131) the highest for eighteen years: there were 1,844 members in Dinorwic, another 928 in Ffestiniog and 2,650 in Caebraichycafn. (132) The 1896-97 defeat shattered this confident picture, however; in 1898 membership slumped to 1654 (133) and by July 1899 the union had only 822 members. (134)

Support fell drastically in Caebraichycafn with only half as many members in 1898 as in 1897, and only half as many again in 1899, but the collapse was even more drastic in other lodges, contributions from Ffestiniog falling in 1899 to only a fifth of the 1897 total; only Alexandra and Moeltryfan maintained their membership. The most serious collapse took place in Lodge No.1. Dinorwic, which, boasting almost 2,000 members in 1897, seems to have had no members at all by 1900, (135), though this may have had as much to do with the quality of the local leadership as with the effects of the Penrhyn dispute; for Thomas W. Thomas the lodge's delegate to the union council had complained in January 1897 that " there is a need of new leaders for us in Dinorwic ". (136)

The agreement signed on August 18th 1897 specified that

" All the late employees who desire work in the Penrhyn Quarry will be re-admitted in a body as far as it is practicable, and the remainder as soon as work can be arranged for them... "(137)

The rub came in the " as far as it is practicable", for though the 71 men suspended in September 1896 were, with one exception, allowed back and David Davies and Robert Owen, whose suspension had led to the dispute, were also given work after Young had " heard your expressions of regret for the great mistakes which you made", (138) twenty-five men were not allowed to re-start work. Only one, Azariah Roberts, a committee man representing the men working under contract, was an union activist, (139) and the others were considered " men of bad characters or unsuitable workmen ". (140) Men like David Parry, Tanybwllch, Llandegai considered by the management to be " a rambler and greatly addicted to drink" and who later worked on the Liverpool Docks, (141) or William Griffith Williams who was also excluded for drinking and was in trouble again in 1902 for being drunk at 8.15.a.m. (142)

Whatever the management's reasons for excluding these men, however, they were clearly driving home with a vengeance the advantage gained by their victory. If these men had been taken on and dismissed a week later, W.H.Williams argued, there would have been little complaint, but to refuse to take them back at all was a clear breach of the agreement and of the assurance given by Lloyd Carter, Lord Penrhyn's solicitor, that " no one would be left out ". (143)

There was little the men could do but protest and the management's uncompromising position boded ill for the future.

As union organisation in the quarry weakened, E.A. Young became increasingly aggressive in his tactics. By 1898 he had a Mr. Ellis, " my new detective", (144) gathering information about the leaders in the quarry and in May 1898 he felt strong enough to sack two prominent union activists, John Williams, 'Rynys, and Peter Roberts, Carneddi, for a breach of safety regulations, a "slight breach", according to Parry, "... that no one was ever known to have been dismissed for before ". (145)

Peter Roberts was " the very man who some years ago was always crying out for a Government Inspector" so his dismissal on safety grounds supplied Young with a certain satisfaction while it is clear that John Williams was dismissed for being " one of the very bitterest and most mischievous men during the strike ". (146)

In December 1898 William R. Evans, the chairman of the men's committee was, without any explicit reason, dismissed, despite the fact that Young held a low opinion of his powers as an agitator; he was, he wrote contemptuously

" about 62 - 65 of rather poor physique and no apparent sign of intellectual power, in fact not in any way a man I should have expected others to elect for their chairman ". (147)

To many in the quarry, however, he must have symbolised the union's steady and unceasing perseverance for, associated with the union since its inception, he had served as an official of the lodge for the sixteen years since he became Treasurer in 1882 (148) and he had also been a delegate to the N.W.Q.U. Council.

In June 1899 Young picked off another unionist of importance, Robert Davies; again no reason was given. Like W.R.Evans, Davies had long been associated with the union in Caebraichycafn and he had been a member of the deputation that visited Penrhyn in 1897, he had also been prominent in the N.W.Q.U., serving as a Vice-President in 1895 and 1896 and as President in 1897. (149) The union gave him £6 on the occasion of the loss of his livelihood. (150)

Young attacked on other fronts as well. In November 1899 he refused to accept a peace offering from the committee, who had offered a gift to Lord Penrhyn, (151) and he also unilaterally issued an instruction changing the rules for blasting in the quarry and, more significantly, reducing the number of holidays enjoyed by the men, when he ordered the doing "away entirely with what one called Bangor Fair Days" (152) and other privileges. Victory appeared to be his, but his actions were welling up a reservoir, not only of fear, but also of hate and bitterness. The damn burst in November 1900, three years after the truce of 1897. And this time the battle was "to be to the death", (153) compromise to be a word without meaning to either Penrhyn or Bethesda.

6.) The New Leaders.

The two men who were to dominate the N.W.Q.U. after 1897 - D.R.Daniel and W.H.Williams - were possessed of two very different characters. Williams had risen to his

position after a lifetime in the Penrhyn Quarries and a position of leadership during the 1896 - 97 dispute; Daniel's connections with the quarrying industry previous to his appointment were non-existent.

Previous to his election as organiser for the N.W.Q.U. in January 1896, when he defeated J.W. Thomas of Waenfawr by 752 votes to 267 in a low poll, (154) there was little in Daniel's career to suggest an interest in either slate quarrying or in trade unionism. He was born in 1859, (155) the son of a tenant farmer, in the rural area of Cefnddwysarn, Merionethshire. In the next farm Tom Ellis, later to be M.P. for Merioneth and the hope of Welsh radicalism, grew up as a close childhood friend. Though a Calvinistic Methodist Daniel attended the local Congregationalist College in Bala, presumably with the aim of training for the ministry. He visited the United States in 1885 and returned to Wales in 1887 as a propagandist for the temperance crusader " Plenydd ". He became a well-known speaker for the U.K. Alliance and " debated in favour of the principle of the control of the (drink) market by the people from hundreds of platforms ". (156) He also became active in the radical Liberal ferment of the time " delighting to sit at the feet of the Italian teacher Mazzini ". (157) Having moved to Four Crosses, near Chwilog to live, Caernarfonshire Liberalism now became his stage and he became an intimate friend of David Lloyd George; in 1895 he was elected an alderman of Caernarfon County Council.

How he came to stand for the post of organiser for the N.W.Q.U. is far from clear though it seems likely that his many and influential friends in the Liberal

Party in Caernarfonshire considered that his talents would be put to good use there. Once elected he displayed considerable energy and he was soon deeply involved in arguing the Penrhyn men's case and he clearly enjoyed the confidence of the local leaders in Bethesda in a way that W.J. Parry and W.J. Williams no longer did.

The years that followed were extremely difficult ones for the union but Daniel did make many attempts at recruitment, using his skills as a propagandist to prepare a series of pamphlets on the necessity of union organisation in the quarries. (158) And during the 1900 - 3 battle his oratory was a constant feature of the strike meetings and the press reports. In 1906 he left the union as abruptly as he had arrived accepting a London-based post as Second Secretary of the Coast Erosion Committee. Lloyd George was, without question, in part responsible for bringing his old friend to Whitehall and Daniel remained in London until his death in 1931.

Though he had earlier been a religious man his radical, inquiring mind led him to doubt many of his earlier beliefs. Observing the religious revival of 1904-5 he remarked that he was,

" thinking much of this revival. They seem to be in a different plane from my own ", (159) and in his later London years he moved further away from orthodoxy and became active in the Ethical and Positivist Societies.

In the shadow of his prominent friends Daniel has been largely forgotten and the judgement of another famous compatriot of him is cruel indeed,

Thomas Jones described him as belonging

" to the class described by the early Russian novelists as " superfluous men ", by French novelists as a " cut out of cloth which had no thickness " of whom we have examples in Wales - brilliant talkers full of good impulses, devoid of will power, content to puff rings of smoke from cigarettes enchantées. With them to do a thing and to say they had done it was the same. They were poets of sorts. In his charming futility Daniel was in complete contrast to the energetic friends of his youth " . (160)

Something of this comes through his years with the N.W.Q.U. but on the whole his leadership, while not blessed with any particular success, was marked, at least, by enthusiasm and energy and what appeared to be a genuine enough commitment to the quarrymen's cause. During these years, moreover, Daniel came as close as he ever did to actually affecting the course of significant events.

If Daniel's sharp mind and radical energies found only a partial outlet in the N.W.Q.U. W.H. Williams was a man made for his union position, and yet his rise to influence had been equally unpredictable. Williams' reputation as a quarrymen's leader had been somewhat dimmed by the careers of W.J. Parry who had preceded him and R.T. Jones who was to follow and yet he was in many ways the quarrymen's most important leader if only because he expressed in his own personality so much that belonged and was unique to the quarrymen and their culture. The Penrhyn battles are understandable only in the light of the humane fury of the outraged consciences of Williams and of men like him.

William H. Williams was born to a deeply religious quarryman's family in Llwybr Main, Mynydd Llandegai, near Bethesda in 1848. Though generally known as "W.H." his neighbours knew him throughout his life as William Arafon, -Arafon being the name of the house where he was born. (161) His formal education was minimal and he started work in the Penrhyn Quarries when he was ten and apparently mastered the quarry craft while still young. His father died when he was fourteen leaving his mother with ten children to raise.

Williams was seeped in the culture of the chapel and he read deeply in the field of theology; his English was apparently faultless and he had studied Mazzini and Carlyle in that language (162) and also given simultaneous translations into Welsh of public readings of The Times held during the quarrymen's dinner hour. But Welsh was his chosen medium and he rarely spoke in English, even when conducting negotiations with a monoglot English management. He saw no reason to justify this: challenged by the chairman of Caernarfon County Council who asked him to speak in English, Williams replied in Welsh, and then continued in the same language. (163)

He apparently took an active part in the 1874 dispute in the quarry (164) and may have been the William Williams from Llwybrmain who represented the Holywell and Tangarret districts on the lodge committee of that year. (165) But there is no evidence of his taking any prominent role again in quarry affairs until 1889 when he served as a Vice-President of the N.W.Q.U. (166), his name first appears in the minutes of the Caebraichycafn lodge in the same year when he was chosen as a member of a local rules revision committee. (167)

In 1890 he was representative on the lodge's general committee of the Edward (Twll) district and in July of that year he was elected President of the lodge. (168) For the next three years he was deeply involved in union affairs in the quarry; in July 1891 he was elected a member of a deputation of eight to represent the quarrymen in negotiations (169) and he was a member of a further deputation in April 1892. (170) In the same month he represented the lodge on the N.W.Q.U. council (171) and he was elected annual president of the union in May 1892. (172) In February 1893 he was a member of a further deputation to represent the men, (173) and he was active throughout that year supporting the conference in support of Llechwedd quarrymen on strike in August (174) and attending the special conference on union rules in October. (175)

He had therefore made his mark on the union both locally and centrally in the four years to 1893 but he was not one of the long-standing stalwarts of the Bethesda lodge such as William R. Evans or Hugh H. Davies and it was clear that the union thought more of his abilities and of the contribution he could make than he did himself for he refused to appear as one of the N.W.Q.U.'s representatives to give evidence before the Royal Commission on Labour in 1891 (176) and appears to have dropped out of union activity completely at the end of 1893.

There is no question, however, that he was one of the most influential men in Bethesda and the surrounding area, an influence that certainly seems to have been well established by 1891 when an eulogistic portrait of him was victorious in a local eisteddfod. (177) The author

of this essay, John Williams, 'Rynys, who was himself to be a prominent and victimized leader of the Bethesda quarrymen, saw that Williams' standing in the community owed much to the considerable strength of his personality and to his deep involvement in the local Calvinistic Methodist chapels. He had been raised to a deacon in Hermon (M.C.) chapel in 1876 (178) and he had an impressive presence in chapel meetings::

" when conducting the means of grace in public, he submitts himself on his knees, one hand on the seat, the other holding the lamp post ". (179)

He was a strict father (180) but a good and enlightened Sunday School teacher drawing out his pupils and encouraging them always to think about questions rather than to give the mechanical answers, learnt by rote , demanded by many teachers. (181) And he had a reputation also as a cultured and learned man, his two best-read books being the Bible and Lewis Edwards'. " Athrawiaeth yr Iawn " (The Philosophy of Right) though he had also read far wider than was usual.

He was a formidable and insistent debater, few adversaries in theological or political discussions escaped unscathed; with a reputation as a deep thinker he rarely changed his mind once he had committed himself, " he does not bend to anyone or anything ", noted John Williams, " though it is possible to take that which is praiseworthy in him too far, and perhaps his weak spot comes to light here - too stubborn". (182) A humorous man who delighted in that vein of Welsh humour which relates character-displaying stories and perceptive remarks, there was no mistaking the forcefulness and strength of his personality. " You do not have to talk

to him for long", recalled E.M.Humphreys, " to see that beneath the humour, the tolerant philosophy, the easy-going manner... there lay steel". (183)

In 1891 John Williams considered him to be

"The 'Paul' of our thinkers

The 'Gamaliel' of our Sunday School

'John', the dear disciple of the Church

and the 'Moses' of the quarryman".

It was in this last role that he was to make a central contribution to the struggles of the Penrhyn quarrymen. He took little or no part in the committee's preparations for the dispute in 1896 (184) but once the struggle had started he gave his public and eloquent support to the cause and he was given a "princely" welcome by the first mass meeting of the men on August 25th 1896, when he warned of the invincible power of Lord Penrhyn. (185)

Leadership of the struggle was imposed upon him, however, rather than coming of his own choosing. According to John Williams, in his 1896 addendum to his original portrait, he was more than once asked to take a leading role but had adamantly refused all entreaties. (186)

One of Lord Penrhyn's conditions during the early attempts at negotiations was that any deputation that came to discuss with him would not contain any of the 71 men suspended in September 1896, since all the members of the men's committee were amongst the 71 the movement appeared effectively decapitated.

But W.H.Williams had not been a member of the committee nor had he been one of the 71 suspended. From then on Lord Penrhyn had, by his own conditions, to negotiate with Williams, a mistake which was soon recognised by Penrhyn who wrote to Sir.Courtney Boyle of the Board of

Trade in December 1896 protesting at the inclusion of Williams in the delegation for

" the tone of some of the recent speeches made by William H. Williams... is such as to give but little hope of his acting in a conciliatory spirit in the suggested negotiations ". (187)

And since entering the fray W.H.Williams had poured all his intransigence and massive sense of principle into his speeches. John Williams witnessed the metamorphosis of the devout and modest dogmatist into the scalded conscience and hard head that was to inspire the men of Caebraichycafn for four years of sacrifice, on the evening of November 14th in the Market Hall, Bethesda. For then " he ascended to the summit of eloquence and inspiration" and turned " the aim of his revolver, the muzzle of his cannon " on the doubters,

" He was on that night like the fire that melts, the fervency of his eyes, the stance of his body, the clenched fists, the fury in his voice; the inhabitant inside had been disturbed, and yes! the chieftains of our land would have to bend to truth and to justice and alleviate the wrong done to the oppressed". (188)

He rapidly became the dominant figure in the dispute speaking at many public meetings and conducting the negotiations virtually single-handed: during the meeting with Lord Penrhyn and E.A.Young on March 18th his two comrades in the deputation spoke only once during the three and a half hour meeting and then only to endorse his position (189) though by the May negotiations Young discerned some differences amongst the deputation for

" Robert Davies in particular, showed (I thought) considerable signs of uneasiness when Williams

persisted that he did not think the men would accept these terms and on this occasion neither he nor H. Jones chimed in to agree as they usually do". (190)

But there was still no doubting who the authoritative figure was.

Williams was a respected leader of his community in the only two ways that mattered to that community - at work and in prayer. He took the moral certainty, the intimacy with the absolute of the Hermons (M.C.) and the Jerusalems and the Bethesdas into an industrial struggle which he was shrewd enough to realise early could hardly be won, but then, as he saw it, "it was not the result that was the question but what was their duty". (191) We shall assess later the importance of this attitude in the course of the Penrhyn disputes but there is no question but that W.H. Williams in this respect expressed the feelings of a great many of the people of Bethesda.

His leadership of the 1896-97 dispute, and his known dissatisfaction with the settlement, catapulted him into the new post of Financial Secretary of the N.W.Q.U. in December 1898 when he won the election to the post with a huge majority. He remained working with the union until his death in 1917 though in later years he was not to figure as prominently as he had once done. A radical Liberal most of his life he switched his allegiance to the Labour Party before his death though his friend E.M. Humphreys, himself an early member of the I.L.P. in North Wales, doubted his understanding of socialism; his real allegiance Humphreys felt, was to trade unionism and the, in his eyes, sacred principle of the right of workers to combine. (192)

CHAPTER VI The 1890s: Expectant Decade

1. The Early Nineties.

1. Y Genedl Gymreig. 2. 9. 91.
2. Pennant's father, Lord Penrhyn, died the following year and Pennant inherited the title.
3. Bethesda Minute Book. 20. 1. 90; the resolution had been passed 26. 8. 89.
4. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book., 27. 4. 89.
5. ibid., 27. 7. 89.
6. ibid., 26. 10. 89.
7. ibid., 4. 1. 90.
8. ibid., 17. 5. 90.
9. ibid.
10. W.J.Parry, The Penrhyn Lock Out, 1901 p.53.
296 voted for the Local Fund, 1,392 for the union.
11. Bethesda Minutes Book. 18. 7. 90.
12. ibid., 12. 9. 90. The four galleries were Ponc Lord, Sinc Bach Twll No.2., Ponc Smith, Ffridd.
13. ibid., 13. 9. 90.
14. ibid., 11. 10. 90.
15. N.W.Q.U. Minutes Book. 13. 12. 90.
16. Bethesda Minutes Book. 19. 2. 90.
17. ibid., 13. 3. 91; these demands were (1) that wages be 5/- a day for quarrymen, rybelwrs, miners, smiths and moulders; 4/9d for sawyers; 4/6d for bad-rockmen and loaders; 4/- for labourers.
(2) that more liberty be allowed in the selection of partners and that rybelwrs be let monthly bargains.
(3) that in cases where the men fail to reach

the standard for two months in succession they be given a price the third month to enable them to make this up.

(4) that the custom of allowing the last Wednesday in the quarry month as a day off be restored.

18. ibid., 1. 7. 91.
19. Parry. op. cit., p.53.
20. Bethesda Minutes Book. 8. 8. 91.
21. Parry. op. cit., p.54.
22. N.W.Q.U. Minutes Book. 8. 8. 91.
23. Bethesda Minutes Book. 26. 8. 91.
24. ibid., 25., 26. 4. 92.
25. ibid., 24. 5. 92.
26. N.W.Q.U. Minutes Book. 25. 6. 92.
27. 20. 7. 92.
28. 13. 9. 92.
29. Bethesda Minutes Book, 8, 18. 12. 92., three of those approached refused the job and Robert Davies accepted only with great reluctance.
30. ibid., 27. 2. 93.
31. ibid., 13. 3. 93.
32. N.W.Q.U. Minutes Book., 13. 5. 93.
33. Parry op. cit., p.69, 70. In his statement he referred to " some rather evasive answers (more particularly from John Roberts, who made a very bad impression on one by fencing with the truth and refusing repeatedly to answer me in a straightforward manner)". This attack on an individual member of the delegation greatly angered the men.

34. Bethesda Minutes Book. 9. 9. 93.
35. ibid., 25. 1. 94.
36. ibid., 25. 5. 95.
37. ibid., 7. 9. 95.
38. ibid., 11. 8. 94.
39. ibid., 8. 6. 95.
40. ibid., 11, 18. 5. 94, 3. 12. 94. The lodge organised a meeting in May 1894 to discuss the role of 'agents' in miners' unions.
41. ibid., 19. 4. 94.
42. ibid., 15. 2. 96.
43. ibid., 15. 3. 96.

2. The Principle of Combination.
44. N.W.Q.U. Minutes Book. 27. 6. 96.
45. Parry. op. cit., p. 105.
46. N.W.Q.U. Minutes Book., 15, 16. 5. 91.
47. Y Genedl Gymreig, 11. 5. 92.
48. Parry op. cit., p.109.
49. ibid., p. 72.
50. (Y)r (H)erald (C)ymraeg, 21. 6. 96.
51. Parry op. cit., p. 72.
52. ibid., p. 74.
53. GAS (P)enrhyn)Q(uarry) L(etter) B(ook) 139
letter from E.A.Young to Mr.Patridge 22.8.1896.
54. Parry op. cit., p.89.
55. ibid.
56. A section of it covers 11 printed pages
in Parry op. cit., pp. 91 - 102.
57. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 25. 8. 96.

58. Parry, op. cit., p.90.
59. ibid., p.103.
60. Y.H.C. 29. 9. 96.
61. N.W.Q.U. Minutes Book., 29. 9. 96.
62. Parry, op. cit., p.110.
63. ibid., p. 104.
64. Y.H.C. 29. 9. 96.
65. Parry, op. cit., p. 104.
66. ibid., p. 105.
67. Y.H.C. 6. 10. 96.
68. Usually sung to the tune, 'Pembroke'.

3. The Strike.

69. Y.H.C. 6. 10. 96.
70. ibid.
71. Y.H.C. 10. 11. 96.
72. Y.H.C., 6. 10. 96.
73. Y.H.C. 20. 10. 96.
74. Y.H.C. 10. 11. 96.
75. Meetings in Groeslon in October (Y.H.C. 27.10.96)
Dolwyddelan and Trawsfynydd in November,
(Y.H.C., 17. 11. 96.); Llithfaen in
December (Y.H.C. 15. 12. 96.)
76. Y.H.C. 10. 11. 96.
77. Y.H.C. 17. 11. 96.
78. Y.H.C. 1. 12. 96.
79. Y.H.C. 29. 12. 96.
80. N.W.Q.U. Minutes Book. 2. 1. 97.
81. Y.H.C. 15. 12. 96.
82. ibid.

83. Y.H.C. 29. 12. 96.
84. Bethesda Minutes Book. 13. 9. 93., 7.12.93;
they also collected £21 for Hull strikers in
that year. (ibid., 12. 6. 93)
85. Y.H.C. 10. 11. 96.
86. Y.H.C. 1. 12. 96.
87. P.Q.L.B. 292, 15. 6. 97.
88. Parry op. cit., p. 168.
89. Y.H.C. 13. 10. 96.
90. Y.H.C., 20. 10. 96.
91. Parry, op. cit., p. 168.
92. Y.H.C. 13. 10. 96. They were working in
the Felin Fawr.
93. ibid.
94. Y.H.C. 6. 10. 96.
95. Y.H.C. 13. 10. 96.
96. Y.H.C. 1. 12. 96.
97. Y.H.C. 29. 12. 96.
98. P.Q.L.B. 260, E.A.Young to Col. Ruck,
7. 4. 97.
99. P.Q.L.B. 274, Young to Ruck, 15. 5. 97.

4. Negotiations and Settlement.

100. Twenty six of the letters exchanged between
men, master and the Board of Trade can be
found in Parry, op. cit., pp. 117 - 129.
101. Parry op. cit., p. 121.
102. ibid., p. 122.
103. ibid., p. 128.
104. Hansard, Sir William Harcourt (Monmouthshire West
28. 1. 97., 726.

105. Parry, op. cit., p. 144.
106. One of the reasons for the delay in arranging the meeting was a dispute over interpreters and shorthand writers.
107. Parry, op. cit., p.158. The transcript of the meeting is printed pp. 148 - 159.
108. ibid., p. 162.
109. N(ational) L(ibrary) of W(ales) D.R.Daniel Collection 2496 a typescript of " a true and correct account of the circumstances attending the negotiations referred to in it signed by William H. Williams, Robert Davies, Henry Jones (Deputation); C.W.Brymer, Secretary Relief Fund; David R. Daniel Organising Secretary Quarrymen's Union ". p. 17.
110. GAS M/622/25, Penrhyn v Parry, Rider by Mr.H.Lloyd Carter,.
111. P.Q.L.B.. 307, E.A.Young to J.G.Ashmore, 24. 8. 97.
112. P.Q.L.B.. 306. Young to J.Menzies, 23. 8. 97.
113. Parry, op. cit., p. 163.
114. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 28. 8. 97.
115. P.Q.L.B.. 307, E.A.Young to J.Nellar, 24.8.97.

5. The Aftermath.

116. see pp.197.
117. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book., 28. 8. 97.
118. ibid., 25. 9. 97. 9 Districts in Penrhyn had no opinion on the question.
119. ibid.
120. ibid., 30. 10. 97.

121. ibid., 24. 12. 97., J.E.Williams received
593 votes, D. Ll Humphreys 207.
122. ibid., Nantlle and Glyn Uchaf gave more votes
to J.E.Williams.
123. Situated at 7 Market Street, Caernarfon.
124. GAS XNWQU / 278, W.J.Williams to the
Pwllgor Gweithiol, 22. 8. 98.
125. XNWQU / 101 / 457, D.R. Daniel to W.J.Williams,
4. 10. 98. See also 101 / 453.
126. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book, 9. 7. 98.
127. D.R.Daniel Collection 2496, p.8.
128. GAS M/622/25 Rider by H. Lloyd Carter.
129. GAS M/622/24 Proof of H.Lloyd Carter.
130. ibid.
131. Annual Report on Trade Unions, 1897.
132. XNWQU / 48. Cash Books.
133. Annual Report on Trade Unions.
134. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. - / 7 / 99.
135. XNWQU / 48, Cash Books.
136. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 2. 1. 97.
137. Terms of Settlement, Clause 5.
138. P.Q.L.B. 309, E.A. Young to D.Davies and
R.Owen, 2. 9. 97..
139. Parry op. cit., p.167.
140. ibid.
141. Penrhyn Quarry Mss, Correspondence PQ 100/42,
D.D.Davies to H.Meares, 24. 6. 1902.
142. ibid., 12. 4. 1902.
143. Parry op. cit., p.166.
144. PQLB 404 - 406, Young to Pennant, 2. 6. 98.
145. Parry op. cit., p. 168.
146. PQLB 404 - 406.

147. PQLB 490, 2. 12. 98.
 148. Cofnodydd Penderfyniadau Pwyllgor y Gwaith
Caebraichycaf, 12. 5. 82.
 149. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book, 6. 5. 95, 2. 5. 96,
1. 5. 97.
 150. ibid. 29. 7. 99.
 151. PQ 99/6, 22. 11. 99
 152. ibid., Private letter from E.A.Young to
H.P.Meares. 24. 11. 99.
 153. Coetmor Mss 73, p.258, W.J.Parry to
Wm George, 24. 11. 1900.
-
6. The New Leaders.
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154. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book, 18. 1. 96.
 155. This, and subsequent information about Daniel,
is drawn from Mrs. K.W. Jones-Roberts,
" D.R.Daniel ", Journal of the Merioneth
Historical and Record Society, 19. pp. 58-78.
 156. Coetmor Mss 44, p. 73 - 4. (Papur Pawb 15.6.95)
 157. ibid.
 158. Four of these pamphlets were printed by
May 1900: " Paham y dylwn fod yn Undebwr",
(Why I Should be a Trade Unionist), " Addysg
ar Chwarelwr " (Education and the Quarryman),
"Yr Awr Giniaw " (The Dinner Hour) and "Undeb
Undebau " (The unity of unions). N.W.Q.U.
Minute Book. 7. 5. 1900.
 159. Jones - Roberts op. cit.
 160. Thomas Jones, Welsh Broth.
 161. E.M.Humphreys, "W.H.Williams ", Gwyr Enwog Gynt
(1950) pp. 113 - 123. p. 115.

162. The Clarion, 31. 10. 96.
163. Humphreys op. cit., p. 123.
164. ibid., p. 116.
165. N.L.W. W.J.Parry, Mss 8738B, Llyfr
Penderfyniadau Perthynol i gangen Undeb
Chwarelwyr Gogledd Cymru. Dosbarth
Caebraichycfn. 1874.
166. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 25. 5. A position
of no great influence.
167. Bethesda Minute Book, 15. 11. 89.
168. ibid., 18. 7. 90.
169. ibid., 9. 7. 91.
170. ibid., 26. 4. 92.
171. ibid., 13. 4. 92.
172. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book, 7. 5. 92.
173. Llyfr Perthynol i Lodge No.2. Caebraichycfn,
11. 2. 93.
174. ibid., 30. 8. 93.
175. ibid., 5. 10. 93.
176. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book, 20. 6. 91.
177. John Williams 'Rynys, Braslun Buddugol o
William H. Williams Arafon, Bethesda 1896.
178. ibid., p. 13.
179. ibid., p.9. Williams complains that he had a
tendency to pray for too long " as if seeing
a second light and growing more tenacious ".
180. ibid., p.6.
181. ibid., p.9.
182. ibid., p.7.
183. Humphreys op. cit., p. 113.
184. He was not a member of the men's committee
until elected in February 1896.

- 185. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 25. 9. 96.
- 186. J. Williams, op. cit., p. 13.
- 187. Parry, op. cit., p. 121.
- 188. J. Williams, op. cit., p. 15 - 16.
- 189. Parry, op. cit., p. 159.
- 190. PQLB 279, E.A. Young to Lord Penrhyn, 20.5.97.
- 191. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 20. 10. 96.
- 192. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 122.

The North Wales Quarrymen's Union,

1874 - 1900: An Assessment..

The North Wales Quarrymen's Union, established in 1874, was not to be in the nineteenth century an altogether successful organisation. It served, of course, to a significant extent, to defend and advance its members interests on numerous occasions, but the enduring impression left by its history in this period is one of weakness, ineffectiveness and tragic defeat. Apart from a few brief months in 1878 the union never succeeded in organising more than 8,000 of the 16,000 or so quarrymen labouring in the slate quarries and mines of north-west Wales; for many years the number organised was hardly a third of that total, and on more than one occasion the union came perilously close to extinction.

Following the years of boom which lasted until 1879 and which witnessed the union's enjoyment of some heady success, steady growth and encouraging consolidation, the slate industry entered a long period of depression, not significantly relieved until the late 1890s, which had a seriously damaging effect upon the union..

In the twenty years from 1880 to the turn of the century there were fewer than thirty strikes or lock-outs in the industry, (1) compared with over twenty in the previous five years, and few of these ended in success.

The major battles of the post - 1880 period, the five-month lock-out in Dinorwic in 1885, the Llechwedd dispute of 1893, and the Penrhyn lock-outs of 1896-7 and 1900 - 03, all ended in, at best, unsatisfactory compromise or, at worst, in total defeat.

While membership fluctuated greatly from year to year, the overall picture was one of constant decline: from an average of 7,667 members for the five years from 1875, the union fell to an average of 4,376 in the five years from 1880 and declined even further to 3,469 for the nineties and 2,995 for the first decade of the twentieth century. (2) Membership slumped dramatically in the only too bitter aftermath of the struggles of 1893, 1897 and 1903. When the union affiliated to the General Federation of Trade Unions in 1899 it had fewer than a thousand members. (3)

The N.W.Q.U. was not, of course, alone in being a weak trades union. One is struck by the resilience which the organisation at times displayed: it did after all survive despite all its difficulties and defeats, and the quarrymen themselves fought some of the most determined battles in trade union history to defend their right to organise. Yet the union failed to organise the majority of slate quarrymen and failed, moreover, to hold for any length of time many of those that it did organise. Many possible reasons for this failure suggest themselves: the depression itself was a major factor, but there were other weaknesses, in the nature of the industry, the structure of the union and the policies of its leaders, which the depressed state of the industry only served to expose. This chapter is particularly concerned to locate and understand those factors underlying the union's weaknesses.

The N.W.Q.U. played an important and often dramatic part in the history of Gwynedd in the last quarter of the nineteenth century; had it been a stronger and healthier organisation, then tragedy and defeat might not

so often have had to be the bitter harvest reaped by the quarrymen's courage.

The picture, and the possibilities, were not always depressing: the quarrymen formed a small workforce, culturally homogeneous and not riven by strict craft hostilities, and they were in a potentially powerful position to influence the world production of slate. Above all, the N.W.Q.U's birth had been successful beyond all reasonable expectation; after only a few months of existence two of Wales's most powerful men lay smitten by its efforts. This was a victory the impact of which can hardly be overestimated; as a contemporary observer of the quarrying industry commented:

" Mr. Assheton-Smith and Lord Penrhyn, the noble proprietors of these quarries, suffered a defeat that North Wales had never seen its equal in any connection, or under any circumstances whatever. (4)

In the months following the 1874 victories the union's influence was felt throughout the industry, in quarries large and small. According to that perceptive observer of the slate industry, Morgan Richards, ' the name of the union became a " terror " to the owners ', and in quarry after quarry to whisper its name was sure to bring concessions. (5) Wages rose throughout the industry and the selling price of slates had to be re-adjusted three times to make up for the wage rises, (6) an unprecedented act as price lists were always set at the beginning of the year and were valid for the coming twelve months. The insistent pressure from the union went so far as to effect the only common prices policy

achieved by the quarrelsome quarry-owners when, in 1875,
at the request of the Merioneth owners, the otherwise
headstrong Dinorwic and Penrhyn quarry managements agreed
not to increase their prices as this would fan " the flame
of disquietude raging among the men and encourage them to

(7)
strike ". The officials of the N.W.Q.U. assessed in May
1875 that

" more by upwards of £150,000 has been paid in wages
during the last year in the slate quarries of
North Wales than in any other year ". (8)

The union also had some successes in reducing the excessive
hours of work, (9) a serious grievance for men who often
had to walk miles over stony mountain paths before they
started their labours. " It is too hard ", said a delegate
to the first N.W.Q.U. Conference, " to get up between four and
five in the morning, take a hasty meal, then off to work, and
return home between six and seven in the evening.. What is the
value of such a life ? " (10) Campaigns on the question had
been launched with some success in Dinorwic and Ffestiniog (11)
and a two-week strike on the hours question in the Penyrorsedd
Quarry in Nantlle brought a satisfactory settlement. (12)

The three years 1875 - 7, with the union growing in
strength and the owners eager to settle in order to

satisfy a booming market, did not witness many serious strikes. There was a dispute at the Welsh Slate Company's Rhiw quarry in early 1875, a "disagreement" at Pantdreiniog Quarry in Bethesda in December 1876, and a short strike at Cwmeiddew, Corris, in May 1877. (13) The only serious incidents occurred when there was a threat from quarry owners to the wages system of the industry, the "bargain" system. Such a threat led to an uncharacteristically riotous response in the Hafod-y-wern Quarry in Betws Garmon in May 1876 and to a two-year strike at the small Rhos quarry in Capel Curig which broke out in December 1877. The young union had had almost auspicious start, but the success was not to last.

The history of trade unionism in general consistently and eloquently testifies to the fact that few agencies are as corrosive of union membership and success as economic depression and its consequences: unemployment, low wages and short time working (14). The depression which affected the slate industry from the late 1870s until the late 1890s was no exception.

In May 1878 the union had a membership of 8,368 (15) and the funds amounted to "a handsome sum of £6,977" (16). The delegates at the 1878 Conference felt well satisfied with their achievements; the union appeared to be on solid enough ground. Storm clouds were gathering, however, that were to test severely the viability of the structure they had built. In his Presidential address of 1878, W.J. Parry warned against a possible downturn in the slate trade and the resulting reduction in wages; the trade, he pointed out, was 'always fluctuating' and it would be as well to be prepared. In fact, a prolonged depression was already setting in, the slate industry's

long " expansionist " phase (17.) was over and the N.W.Q.U. was never again in the nineteenth century to have as many members as it did in that May of 1878.

The effects of the downturn were aggravated by the suddenness of the change in the industry's fortunes. 'The slate trade', wrote W.J. Parry in 1879, 'has during the last six months gone into, if not through, one of the most sudden and strange panics that has ever occurred. (18) For the N.W.Q.U. the depression was a severe blow. within three months of its peak of over 8,000 members, membership had fallen to 6,776. (19) The owners lost no time in cutting wages and attempting to reduce drastically their labour costs. In November 1878 the union council recommended that skilled quarrymen, bad-rockmen and miners accept three-quarters of the reduction in the making price of slates made by the masters, advised labourers to accept half the reduction and day-workers a quarter. (20) (not that many men were in any position to resist the masters' price.) Llanberis went on to a three-day working week, and in January 200 men there were stopped from working. (21) In March 1879 the Penarth Quarry in Corwen went onto three-day working (22) and in May the Penrhyn Quarry Committee accepted a reduction of 2s.6d in the 'average standard' of 27s6d. stipulated by the 1875 Pennant Lloyd agreement, and also went onto a four-day week. (23)

The quarrymen did not accept these changes calmly and there were strikes in numerous quarries, including Cooke and Ddol, the Goodman and Cambrian Quarries, Glynrhonwy Isaf, Chwarel Braich (Rhostryfan), Pantdreiniog, Cilgwyn, Penyrorsedd, Cefn Du (Maenfawr) and Alexandra. On the whole, however, the men were forced to accept the

worsening situation without struggle. The depression turned out to be not a mere 'fluctuation' as W.J.Parry had prophesied but a serious and prolonged recession which only improved slowly in the late nineties. So bad was its impact upon the union that in 1880, only six years after the N.W.Q.U's successful launching, a local newspaper commented that

"the union has apparently fallen into a state of lethargy and but for the anniversaries some might think that the institution that the men formed for their mutual protection has ceased to exist." (24)

The union, in fact, still had over 5,500 members at this time, but the frailty of its construction was becoming increasingly exposed. Most obvious was the great variation in the union's strength from area to area, particularly the difference between, on the one hand, the lodges in Penrhyn and Dinorwic and, on the other, the ones in Dyffryn Nantlle, Ffestiniog and Corris, the other major quarrying areas.

The areas of union strength were Bethesda and Llanberis,. Significant inroads were to be made in the Blaenau Ffestiniog district, but the Nantlle and Corris areas, while supporting small lodges, were for many years, to all intents and purposes, largely unaffected by union influence; the union's 1887 - 91 Roll Book shows only 56 members in the whole Nantlle Valley where some 1,500 quarrymen laboured, and there were only 24 men in lodge No.5 representing Corris and Bryneglwys(25). Even in the heyday of the union this geographical difference had been apparent. In 1877 ten out of every eleven in Penrhyn were union members, in Dinorwic seven

out of every eight; in Corris there were three non-unionists to every member, in the Nantlle Valley the union men were outnumbered four to one, and in the Ffestiniog district by twelve to one. (26) The situation in Ffestiniog was to improve considerably, but the mass of the membership was to remain largely based in the two lodges of Penrhyn and Dinorwic. This was partly due to the fact that it was in these quarries that the union had been born and that it was here that it had achieved most. The victories in Penrhyn and Dinorwic in 1874 had convincingly and clearly demonstrated the value of collective action to the men of those quarries. In other areas, however, the value of union membership was not so obvious, the point of joining not so apparent; as John Owens of Corris pointed out to the 1877 Conference of the union, 'conviction cannot be brought home to some people unless they are directly gainers by the union'. (27) What there was to gain from union membership was by no means as clear to quarrymen outside the Llanberis and Bethesda areas as it was to those who had already experienced the power and benefit of combination.

There were other differences, both in patterns of ownership and methods of working, between the areas which also affected union development. The union's long and energetic campaign to bring the quarries under government safety regulations, for example, and to appoint an Inspector for slate quarries did not have the same appeal to the workers in the underground slate mines of Meirioneth who had, since a legal decision of 1875, come under the jurisdiction of the various Metalliferous Mines Regulation Acts, as it did to the workers in the

'open' quarries of Caernarfonshire whose conditions of work cried out for legal regulation.

It has been suggested that the very geography of the industry, the distribution of the slate vein and the opportunities offered - and taken - to work it, was itself a major cause of weak organisation, (28) that in particular the difficulties of communication imposed by mountainous terrain accounted for a degree of local chauvinism in the various quarrying communities which discouraged the development of a consciousness of common identity amongst quarrymen of different areas. This argument carried some weight. The quarrying communities were relatively stable by the end of the nineteenth century and there was a marked disinclination on the part of quarrymen to move from one area to another (though not to move from one quarry to another within a particular area). On the other hand, the slate industry had a remarkably homogeneous working force supporting many organisations, including energetic religious ones, which seemed to overcome the problems of isolationism easily enough. The industry was concentrated into one small and relatively compact corner of Wales; the union's headquarters were in Caernarfon, situated within a few miles of most of the important quarrying centres. Despite difficult terrain, therefore, the union never faced on anything like the same scale the communication problems which many national unions encountered and which, for example, affected in particularly acute form the stone and granite quarrymen of North Wales who, when they became members of the Settlers Union, had to deal with union headquarters in distant Aberdeen.

In 1903 one third of the Settmakers' union's 3,300 members worked in the granite quarries of North Wales, but the union was Scottish based. (29)

The fact that almost 90 per cent of Britain's slate was produced in this compact area, moreover, gave the union, which never attempted (or needed) to recruit in slate quarries elsewhere in Britain, a potentially very powerful bargaining position. A relatively small workforce could drastically affect the world production of what was then an important commodity. This enviable position compares well with workers in many other industries, particularly coal mining, who when organised regionally were always in a precarious bargaining situation as they could not affect production in other coalfields.

The location and distribution of the quarries did, nevertheless, present problems and proved formidable obstacles to effective trade unionism. The main problem lay in the huge variation in scale between the different enterprises. In the early 1890s there were some sixty quarries and mines being worked for slate in North Wales, employing 13,500 men; (30) almost exactly half of those quarrymen worked in just three quarries, the giant concerns of Penrhyn near Bethesda (2,500 men), Dinorwic in Llanberis (2,590 men) and the Wakeley slate mine in Blaenau Ffestiniog (1,652 men) (31). 3,000 more worked in seven moderately-sized quarries and the remaining 4,000 men were scattered in fifty small workings, 700 of them in quarries employing fewer than 24 men. Two quarries indeed 'employed' only one man. In a mountainous and difficult region the problems confronting the union were obvious and it is not, therefore, surprising that the strength of the organisation always lay in the

two biggest quarries; of 5,355 members in the late 1880s, over 3,000 were concentrated in lodges Nos. 1 and 2, Minnowic and Penrhyn. (32)

Size alone does not appear to have been always a deciding factor, however. The union's position in the giant Oakeley mine was weak, with only 13% of the men unionized, while in the same year (1887) the moderately sized New Welsh Slate Company's Cwmorthin mine (290 men) had a high percentage membership of 60% (33) And some of the smaller and moderately sized quarries sometimes displayed an impressive degree of militancy: the two dozen men at the Rhos Quarry in Capel Curig stayed out for over two years in 1877 - 9, Moeltryfan saw disputes in 1892, 1896, 1899 and 1906, men in Brynhafodywern near Bethesda stopped work in 1879, 1881, 1883 and 1886. (34)

Neither was remoteness a guarantee against union influence. Rhosydd Quarry, which employed fewer than 200 men, was 1,500' above sea level and over four miles up the slopes of the Moelwynion from Blaenau Ffestiniog. Its workforce was drawn mainly from small villages in the Llanfrothen area and most of them stayed in barracks at the quarry from Monday to Saturday; and yet over a quarter of the Rhosydd men were union members and there was a fortnight's strike at the quarry in October 1886.

The semi-rural setting of the industry presented other problems. There was always a sizeable minority of labourers in many of the quarries who were not domiciled near their place of work, but travelled in to work from nearby rural areas. In some quarries these men, some of whom stayed in barracks near their work throughout the week to return home on Saturdays, formed a definite group who did not identify with the body of quarrymen as such and took little

interest in the affairs of the union. This was particularly true of the Anglesey labourers at work in the Dinorwic Quarry who were bitterly criticized by a union man in 1890 for 'being too cowardly, not enough manhood in them to demand their rights'. (35)

Many quarrymen were themselves small-holders and cottagers, a fact which, as one historian has commented, led them to 'follow a life style which stressed a rugged individualism rather than mutual dependence'. (36) This is a question which should be treated with caution, however, for there is little evidence to suggest that quarrymen who lived on small holdings were necessarily any less loyal to their union than those who did not. Indeed, to the contrary; the Moeltryfan Quarry, for example, which appears to have employed a high percentage of cottagers, (37) witnessed a series of industrial clashes in 1892, 1896, 1899 and again in 1906; the only major dispute in Blaenau Ffestiniog took place in 1893 in the Llechwedd Quarry, a mine which was well known as an employer of workers from outside the town of Blaenau itself (38) and, therefore, presumably, with a good number of cottagers at work.

There were other differences within the workforce; in particular there was a degree of craft jealousy and exclusiveness. What is surprising in the history of the N.W.Q.U. is how little this fact affected its development. As the depression deepened in the 1880s the skilled quarrymen became increasingly jealous of their status and attempts were made to limit the number of those recognised as properly skilled. Various plans for establishing an apprenticeship system and of limiting entry into the craft were discussed, but little came of it.

But the resentment between the various grades in the quarrying industry was real enough: a delegate from Nantlle at the N.W.Q.U.'s 1882 conference complained bitterly that "the craft at the present time is too open to all classes to come in.... each and every beast should be prevented from entering", (39) and the rybelwrs and other grades often felt that they were unjustly treated by the skilled quarrymen. (40) More serious was the often expressed division between those who actually worked the rock in some way and those sundry other skilled men employed in the quarries - blacksmiths, carpenters, pattern makers, engine drivers, etc. These men felt quite separate from the mass of quarrymen and were consistently to be found at work during disputes though this had no great effect as their total number was low. (41)

What is striking is that despite these strains the N.W.Q.U. did not fall victim to any serious divisions between its skilled and unskilled membership. Unusual for a trade union in its time, it was, in effect, an industrial union open to all workers employed in the slate industry irrespective of craft. Even the dockers who loaded the finished slate onto ships in Portdinorwic and Port Penrhyn were eligible for membership and had their own lodges; the Dinorwic Lodge of the union represented eight different groups in the quarry; (42) the Penrhyn Lodge negotiated on behalf of platelayers and stonemasons amongst others, (43) and in 1874 the lodge had demanded an increase for the journeymen whom the men themselves employed. (44) This relative unity amongst different sections of quarrymen, therefore, when compared with relations in many other industries, could have supplied

the union with a solid enough base.

Another aspect of work relations in the quarrying industry which, it has been suggested, may have militated against trade union consciousness was the ' bargaining ' system whereby wages were determined.

But the individualistic tendencies inherent in the system should not be overestimated. (45) By the late nineteenth century the system was no more than a formality in many quarries and any genuine element of bargaining between men and master had largely disappeared. Increasingly the men were forced to accept the setting price of the management and this resented fact raised, often in an urgent form, the need for a standardised minimum applicable to all bargain takers which would serve to defend the men when the poundage agreed was low and the rock proved difficult to work.

As we have seen such a demand was a consistent feature of industrial relations in the quarries and the system thus served to unite the men. The bargain system, moreover, by its monthly haggling invited continuous disagreement and bad feeling between the men and managements. Few men

did not at some time or another labour under a sense of grievance for being cheated at the monthly bargain setting.

The Pennant Lloyd Agreement won by the Penrhyn men in 1874 was a clear demonstration of the benefits which could be brought by a standardised agreement on wages to underlie the bargain system itself. The operation of the agreement from 1874 to 1885 showed even more clearly the effectiveness of trade unionism when operating within the bargain system. It was that effectiveness in influencing wages and defending the financial interests of individual crews in dispute which undoubtedly lay behind Lord Penrhyn's decision to withdraw recognition from the union committee in 1885. (46) When it operated as an at least fairly equal arrangement between men and master the bargain system probably was a disincentive to trade unionism and the influence of the system's competitiveness and individualism lingered long in the quarries; when the system was breaking down, however, as it clearly was in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, then its debilitating influence on trade unionism waned and the system could at times become a positive encouragement to collective action. The inevitable corruption which it bred, as men tried to influence the setting agents to give them a good price, was, however, long to remain a source of bitterness and division between Quarrymen.

It was not only via the wages system that the quarry owners made their mark on the growth of the union. Their power and their paternalism were also very relevant factors. Paternalism lay a heavy restraining hand upon any move for changing the relationship between men and master. Lord Penrhyn and Mr. Duff Assheton-Smith,

owner of the Dinorwic Quarries, in particular, controlled well organised machines for dispensing their benevolent patronage, and even in the less ' feudal ' atmosphere of Blaenau Ffestiniog some of the quarry owners made regular paternalistic gestures: seven trainfuls of Oakeley Quarrymen and their families, for example, were entertained in Llandudno in September 1890 at their master's expense. (47)

But this influence again should not be over-estimated; it was that selective use of managerial patronage that came close to bribery and corruption which was the potent divisive force in the Penrhyn Quarries rather than the general air of lordly largesse. And while the Quarrymen were, at least until the struggle of 1900 - 03, always fastidiously careful not to offend the quarry owners personally, as opposed to the managers, their relationship to at least one owner had been bravely stated in 1874 in an explicit rejection of the paternalistic system: ' we are perfectly willing ', said the Penrhyn men's representatives in that year, ' that his lordship should keep his charities to himself - if those in any way interfere with him in his giving us proper wages ".(48) It was in these tones that combination came to challenge paternalism.

An interesting case-study in paternalism is offered by the Cwmorthin quarry near Tanygrisiau. This quarry was famous for its enlightened management, (49) who provided housing for some of its employees, gave generous allowances to the widows of men killed at work and even instituted a profit-sharing scheme. And yet it had one of the worst industrial relations records of any quarry in North Wales.

Paternalism, of course, was a preservative for wealth and power and it was the exercise of this power in rather cruder forms which was to block the union consistently. Victimisation was only too often the lot of any radical or trade unionist in the slate quarries, not only in the well-known cases of Dinorwic and Penrhyn, but also in other areas - the Llechwedd dispute of 1893 was the result of barefaced victimisation, and five members of the union committee had been summarily sacked in Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1891. (50) It was in Penrhyn that the ruthless rooting out of radicals was most vicious, and examples of such action are legion, especially in 1870 and again in the years following the 1896 - 7 lock-out when Lord Penrhyn showed his contempt for the agreement he had just signed by claiming that his promise of no victimisation in no way interfered with his 'right to dismiss whomsoever I wish from the quarry without giving any reason', (51) a 'right' which he freely exercised.

The union's problem in facing up to such power was cruelly simple: compared to the wealth of some of the quarry owners the union would always appear weak. Slate quarrying was, on the whole, a profitable industry, and in the larger quarries it could be hugely profitable. It was estimated by the Mining Journal in 1859 that the 2,500 men working in the Penrhyn Quarries created £100,000 annual net profit for Lord Penrhyn, while the 2,000 men in Dinorwic created £70,000 a year for their employer. (52) A few private individuals, commented the Journal, had 'amassed colossal fortunes'. This trend was to continue; in 1894 another trade journal quoted the figure of £100,000 annual profit for Lord Penrhyn, 'one of the richest men in the Welsh principality', (53)

and in 1898, just before the major Penrhyn struggle broke out, Lord Penrhyn reaped a record £133,000 profit.(54)

The power and ruthlessness of some of the quarry owners therefore was a tremendous obstacle for a small union. But even here the picture was not all black, for a major weakness of the quarry owners was their persistent and signal failure to combine on an industry-wide basis. Only once, shortly after the union had been born in 1874, did the owners demonstrate a united willingness to combat the union. Then, in a famous meeting in the Royal Hotel, Caernarfon, nineteen quarry owners and managers met to kill the union in the bud. They agreed that 'every quarry proprietor in North Wales should refuse to employ any man who is ascertained to be a member of the union'. (55) The union, as we have seen, braved that storm and won decisive victories. From then on the owners showed little interest in another combined onslaught on the union. The owners quarelled over trade matters and over politics, there being strong Tory and Liberal factions. The competitive price war that raged in the industry militated against unity, while a few quarry owners, such as Messrs. Robinson and Darbishire from the Nantlle Valley, were, at times, openly sympathetic to the N.W.Q.U.

Repression and victimisation were dangerous weapons for the owners, effective in the short term but building up a store of bitterness and resentment for future battles: 'Give the screw another turn', warned a correspondent from Bethesda in April 1874, 'and the people here will shout. And you look out for the consequences' (56) a timely warning which Lord Penrhyn was time and again to ignore.

It was no accident that the N.W.Q.U. was strongest in precisely those quarries where the owners were richest and the repression of trade unionists most ruthless, a point which the Liberal and ever-perceptive Morgan Richards noted with some satisfaction in 1881.(57)

Another factor which sapped the potential strength of the N.W.Q.U. was the existence and strength of other organisations which catered for the quarryman's needs. The extensive control of, and energy displayed by, some of the quarryman's own institutions made it difficult for the union to carve out an area for its own specialised functions. The union's failure to develop an adequate welfare scheme, despite regular debates on the issue over twenty-five years, was at least partly the result of the existence in the quarrying districts both of flourishing Friendly Societies and of quarry-organised sick clubs, medical schemes and hospitals. The Independent Order of Oddfellows was established in Bethesda in 1837; on Ascension Day 1845, 500 members from five local lodges paraded colourfully through the town, to be followed by 300 members of the three lodges of the True Ivorites: the Ogwen Benefit Society, a local organisation, also took part in the processions. (58) In 1865 the village supported over twenty Building Societies, a Savings Bank, Insurance Schemes, five different Friendly Societies and the Caerllwynngrydd Lending Society. (59) The competition from such well-organised societies made it difficult for the union to intervene with its own benefit schemes.

The Quarry Sick Clubs and other funds, contributory schemes the control of which was often cause for heated dispute, were also well organised and one unwell

quarrymen relied heavily of them. John Edwards, a quarryman from Ffestiniog, for example, drew about equally from the Oddfellows and the Quarry Fund during the various weeks and months of illness and unemployment which regularly afflicted his 50 years as a quarryman.(60) Even in the field of emigration, which was an important part of union policy in the early 1880s, the N.W.Q.U. found it difficult to compete with other agencies, and though over 250 quarrymen emigrated under its aegis from 1879 to 1881, this was a relatively small percentage of the total number of quarrymen emigrating. (61)

More serious was the union's failure in many areas to establish itself as the men's representative in negotiations with the masters. In Penrhyn after 1885 this was a direct result of managerial intransigence, but in other districts it was simply a result of other, sometimes ad hoc, organisations doing the job.

The successful hours campaign in Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1882, for example, was wages and organised by a committee which does not appear to have had any direct links with the union, and D.G.Williams, the most active and prominent Union figure in Ffestiniog in these years, was not himself a member of the committee though he did play an effective role in the campaign. (62) In many other quarries non-unionists were as active as members in pushing for improvements.

Even more striking was the organisational role of Nonconformist chapels during these years. The chapels weakened trade unionism not because of any hostility toward the N.W.Q.U. but rather because they themselves carried out some of the social and organisational roles in the community which could otherwise have fallen

to the union. During the bitter 1893 strike in the Llechwedd slate mine, for example, fund raising was automatically seen by the strike committee as the function of the chapels and circulars were sent to chapels in North Wales and Liverpool and local ministers dispatched to propagandise on the men's behalf. (63) And in the Nantlle Valley in July 1906 a meeting of quarrymen took the decision that the prevailing difficult situation in the quarries should not be discussed by the union lodges, but that the question should rather be taken to the chapels. (64)

Many factors within the situation in which the N.W.Q.U. had to operate can be seen therefore to have conspired against strong trade union organisation; the prevailing depressed state of the slate industry and the hostility of quarry owners, in particular, being powerful deterrents to combination. And yet, as we have seen, none of the factors mentioned above seem adequate in themselves to explain the union's lack of success and the situation was often contradictory; the very brakes on union development sometimes encouraging that development at the same time. It was not just the objective situation which was unfavourable for the union, though, as we have seen, the conditions were always inclement and often harsh, but the union's own structure, policies and leadership also contributed to its mediocre performance. From here on we shall be concerned with those internal problems which afflicted the union and stunted its growth.

The local organisational structure of the union left much to be desired, for apart from lodges No. 1 and No. 2 in Dinorwic and Penrhyn, the branches were geographical rather than workplace based. Many of the weaknesses of

the union in Ffestiniog and Nantlle stemmed from this form of organisation. The Dinorwic and Penrhyn lodges worked effectively as grievance committees consisting of delegates elected from the various districts of each quarry. Based firmly in the workplace, these lodges thus had immediate day-to-day relationships with problems in the quarries and were in a position to organise and intervene directly in them. The Ffestiniog lodge, on the other hand, worked on a different pattern and had members in at least twelve different quarries. The lodge itself was, therefore, in no position to intervene directly and consistently in the working situation in each quarry, and this was a major weakness in its make-up. In Penrhyn especially the union drew its strength until 1885 from the relative effectiveness of the lodge in defending the men's interests through regular negotiations with management.

Such effectiveness could not be achieved easily in a lodge covering many quarries or, indeed, as with the Penrhyndeudraeth Lodge, consisting of men who lived in one village but who worked in quarries elsewhere. It is not clear how exactly the lodges did operate in Ffestiniog and Nantlle, but there is little evidence of effective co-ordinated action affecting the various quarries represented by these lodges. The relative weakness of the geographically based branches in comparison with the workplace based ones makes too marked a contrast for one not to conclude that the divorce between the union lodge as such and the organisation in the quarry itself, consequent upon geographical organisation, had a serious debilitating effect upon the union's growth. The suggestion was made on the N.W.Q.U.'s

committee in June 1892 that the Nantlle area, where the situation was, as usual, ' very flat ', should adopt a system of separate lodges in each of the quarries, but no action was taken along these lines. (65)

One of the enduring strengths of most trade unions in this period was their extensive benefit schemes. The N.W.Q.U. failed to develop such a scheme partly, as has been mentioned, because of the already well-rooted existence of Friendly Societies and other welfare organisations, but partly also as a result of the union's insufficiently centralised structure. The benefits question had been raised as early as October 1875 (66) and in 1877 the General Secretary, W.J. Williams, proposed a ' Scheme of Relief for Old and Disabled Members ', (67.) 6d contributed per member per quarter would have given 3s. a week to old and disabled members. The scheme was not well received; J.O. Griffith, a founder member of the Union, considered that ' it ran contrary to the functions of the Union. The object of the Union's formation was to protect the quarrymen while at their work, and not to support those of them unable to work'. (68) It was also pointed out that 'A ^{very} few quarrymen reach old age '. (69) The matter was postponed for discussion at the lodges, a procedure to be followed many times later. A scheme put forward by Bethesda Lodge which would have made it possible for the payment of unemployed members was turned down in 1879, (70) as was a scheme proposed by Nantlle Lodge in 1881 and 1883, (71) to help the old, the infirm and the injured; the same scheme was referred back to the lodges again in 1884. (72) It was a very cautious plan which offered nothing until a member had paid his dues regularly for ten years, but

it was still not acceptable. A plan was accepted in 1885, (73) but its implementation was not successful, and the question continued to be discussed and grumbled about in the union for another twenty years.

The union was not indifferent to the welfare of out-of-work members, in the twelve months prior to May 1880 it had collected over £900 ' to assist and alleviate the sufferings of members discharged '.(74) But this money had been collected informally and was in no way connected with the union's funds. The only way in which these funds were used for the immediate financial relief of members was in the event of a lock-out or strike. This assistance was, of course, of tremendous value during the momentous struggles fought by the quarrymen, especially in Penrhyn and Dinorwic, but for the many quarrymen working in quarries which had never experienced significant strike action the promise that the union would pay them in case of such action was a fact of no great consequence. Most quarries in North Wales experienced no strikes or lock-outs in the nineteenth century, and though over 25 quarries did have reported disputes during these years many of these were of brief duration or involved only a section of the workforce. The failure of the N.W.Q.U. to develop a comprehensive benefits scheme, therefore, meant that the financial support offered by the union to its members seemed inconsequential or irrelevant to a good many quarrymen. It also made it difficult for the union to hold on to members. Trade union benefit schemes demanded uninterrupted membership and regular dues payment; the threat to the member's right to receive benefits was thus a great incentive to conscientious membership. Lacking such a

scheme, N.W.Q.U. members often allowed their membership to lapse until trouble loomed again on the horizon.(75)

This failure to develop a benefits scheme was in part a reflection of the lack of decisive leadership from the union's executive committee and from its officials. The union rarely acted as a united force and there was never a real attempt at a unified industrial policy. This reflected the already mentioned sense of district parochialism which was so strong among the quarrymen, but it also, to a significant extent, reflected the nervousness and indecision of the union's leadership, for even when the districts were eager to move together the leadership was not forthcoming. The most dramatic example of this was the new consciousness stirring the quarrymen in the early 1890s. The slate market was improving, while the owners maintained their iron intransigence. In February 1892, with union membership close to 5,000 again, the union's executive decided that the time had come for

' all the quarries to move by making a claim for a rise to 5s. a day in the wages'. (76)

A bond was circulated pledging the signatory to the claim; over 6,500 quarrymen, including close to 2,000 men in each of the three main districts, Dinorwic, Penrhyn and Ffestiniog, signed the bond and the stage seemed set for a united move. The claim was submitted in May and, as was only to be expected, the reaction of the individual owners was a firm negative; Vivian, the manager of Dinorwic, called the claim ' childish ' (77.) and refused to countenance it. Only John Robinson of Talysarn was sympathetic.

The union decided in June to ballot the men; the

ballot paper asked whether

" in the face of the refusal of the masters to meet the claim for a rise in the standard of wages... you are in favour of moving forward to secure (the claim) even as far as a strike, if that be necessary".

The members' reply was unequivocal with 79% in favour of going ahead even if it meant a strike. The eleven lodges balloted each showed a majority for going forward, a total of 5,781 as against 1,534 who wanted the matter delayed. (78) The union, however, continued to delay and showed itself quite unwilling to carry out its members' wishes and decided instead to push for the claim to go to two arbitrators, Sir John Gorst, M.P., and Thomas Burt, M.P. In July the union wrote to the quarry owners expressing their fear that a confrontation between workers and masters might take place,

" a confrontation which we do not wish to see if it can in any way be avoided." (79)

The masters predictably refused arbitration, and the union committee failed to agree to any move other than to 'urge the workers to not step as far as going on strike at the moment'. (80) The earlier unity now began to wilt and many lodge representatives expressed doubts about the whole idea; the union decided to shelve any notion of action and chose instead to gather more precise information about members' wages, a campaign that met with a poor response. In November the union sanctioned a separately negotiated agreement in Ffestiniog which fell below the 5s a day demand. By March 1893 and throughout the Spring of that year the lodges were again pushing for action, but again with little response from the union.

The Llanberis Lodge delegate expressed the feelings of his members:

" they are asking what the Council of the Union are going to do. They are ready to move.

Some are deciding to leave from the union ifm

we do not go forward ",; a similar feeling was expressed by the delegate from Alexandra. (81) But little positive was done and the union continued to dissuade the men from taking strike action. (82) After eighteen frustrating months, the movement for wages became lost in the bitter battle in the Llechwedd mine over a victimisation issue in July 1893.

The union's failure to mobilize its members effectively had a drastic result, and membership fell from 4,346 in 1893 to 1,652 in 1894. Disillusion within the union was widespread. In Dinorwic

" the union is shrinking in membership, and it is of no practical use at all as it is at the moment, all the friends feel very eager for a re-organisation and to start again on better foundations in the future". (83)

This was by no means the first call from within the union for a change in its structure. In April 1890 a ballot was held in Dinorwic on the future of the union when the result had been as follows:

Join with an English Union. 206.

Change the Union's Rules. 254.

Local Union. 363.

Undecided. 58.

For the old union. 72.

Others. 105. (84)

In a further ballot the same month, 579 voted for a

change in the rules and 124 for a break-away local union.

This lack of support for the union grew out of several factors. The move towards ' Home Rule ' for the districts had always been a strong one, but, as can be seen from the above ballots, it was not ^{the} only challenge to the structure of the union, a fact most eloquently shown by the astonishing number of Dinorwic Quarrymen eager to join an unspecified English union, probably the miners' union. (85) Another factor was the increasing frustration as the masters remained hostile and intransigent. No meaningful collective bargaining had existed between men and masters since the employers' successful and ruthless offensive in 1885 when recognition had been removed from the men's most powerful organisation to date, the Penrhyn Quarry committee, and the Dinorwic men had been locked out and humiliated. Unable to fulfil this function, it was inevitable that frustration and disillusion with the union should follow; what is surprising is that the union managed to maintain any followers at all during these bleak years. The nervousness and extreme moderation of the leaders became a cause of disillusion and a real threat to the union's effectiveness. A despondent lodge secretary in Dinorwic in 1890 noted that they had ' lost everything by trying to grasp nothing'. (86) The union's inactivity, partly a consequence of the employers' strength, but reinforced by the beliefs and characters of the union's leadership, called into question for many Quarrymen the reason for its existence.

The union's policies were based on a strict adherence to the rules of a market economy: ' approval and acceptance of laissez-faire ', it has been pointed out, ' provided

a basic theme in the Union's attitude on all matters '.(87)
This was clearly demonstrated in the union's reaction to the advent of the depression in the late 70s. In the face of wage reductions, the union argued against any resistance to 'fair' reductions in wages and urged the men not to be 'defiant' in their behaviour; (88)

W.J.Parry advised the men to 'Be Respectful to their Superiors' as well as 'Faithful to each other' and the union made every effort to avoid conflict. The union's answer to the crisis was 'forbearance' and an emigration scheme, and despite a wave of small disputes in 1878 and four strikes in the first months of 1880, Robert Parry, the union's new president, could credibly compliment his member for

' the great virtue of forbearance had been signally manifested on the part of the quarrymen....

' forbearance' not in the sense it was used towards slaves but forbearance arising out of sincere submission to circumstances and things.' (89)

In the face of the depression the union was in no position to put up a real fight and, afraid of seeing its funds spent on bitter and unwinnable strikes, they counselled submission. In this way, they hoped, they could win the scarce but precious 'respect' of the masters and thus salvage something from a sorry period. This was not the only decision that could have been made, and many N.W.Q.U. member, chose otherwise, but it was the only one consistent with the laissez-faire liberalism of the leadership; their policies were securely anchored in the ideological bed-rock of the free activity of market forces.

In any confrontation with the quarry owners, the

union's counsel was for peace and patience. This was the theory of co-operation between labour and capital propagated by the founding leaders of the union, pre-eminently by W.J. Parry. It was a theory of labour which insisted upon the right of labour to a 'fair' share of the wealth it created but which was also careful not to make 'unreasonable' demands on capital. A belief in the noble qualities of work - and in the respect due to the workman - was also a belief in the sanctity of private property and the proper respect due to gentlemen. It was an ideology well expressed by Robert Parry in his 1881 Presidential address:

" It was true that capital was a great power, but it might be asked whether it was a self dependent or a dependent power. Time need not be wasted to reply to the question. Capital was as dependent upon labour as labour was upon capital.

The one was absolutely necessary to the other." (90)

In this co-operative situation the role of the union was " not to separate the workman from the capital, but to regulate the relation between the two". The union was seen as a force for mediation and moderation, disowning the undisciplined within its own ranks and attempting to curb the overbearing power of haughty quarry owners.

With the onset of the depression, therefore, the union saw it as one of its main tasks to control its members. In 1876 the union had been hard pressed to disassociate itself from the 'riot' in the Hafod-y-Wern Quarry, Betws Garmon, when several hundred Nantlle quarrymen had terrified Cornish workers at the quarry who were breaking the all-important bargain system. This incident was energetically condemned by the N.W.Q.U,

who claimed that 'not a single officer connected with the union was aware that such proceedings on the part of the men were to take place, otherwise, depend upon it, they would have "interfered". (91) And, indeed, only one of the fifteen quarrymen subsequently charged turned out to be a union member.

This nervousness about action by their members characterised the union throughout. In June 1878 they castigated the quarrymen in the Pandreiniog Quarry for taking unauthorised action which impinged upon managerial prerogatives, (92) and in August 1891 they successfully urged caution on the quarrymen of Penrhyn who were eager for determined action. (93)

The union's rules had been framed in such a way as to exercise the greatest possible central control over the strike weapon. Rule 9 insisted that

" no Lodge in any district of the union shall cause or counsel its members to strike work without first dispatching a general statement to the Executive Council, reporting the facts and matters under dispute with the employers of the district.

The Executive shall then depute one or more of its members to the place where the dispute is pending, to investigate the matter at issue, who will bring back a faithful report to the Council. The Council shall then decide whether the members of the union in the district shall leave work or not. (94)

Any lodge not observing this procedure could 'lose the protection of the union'. This rule, however, was hardly effective and the only strictly 'official' strike in the slate industry throughout the nineteenth century was the one called in the small quarry of Rhos in Capel Curig in December 1877. (95)

On every other occasion the union had to accept the decision of the local lodge; this was especially true in the industry's major disputes Dinorwic 1885, Llechwedd 1893, Penrhyn 1896 - 7, 1900 - 03, where the union only became involved sometime after the disputes had already started.

Embarrassed by industrial conflict, the union envisaged its major role as being that of a pressure group acting on behalf of the quarrymen in a wider sphere. This was particularly true following the return to the active leadership of the union in 1884 of W.J. Parry, the union's first General Secretary. Parry led the union away from its previously largely abstentionist political role and developed for it an energetic sectionalist campaign on the question of an Inspectorate for slate quarries. From then on the union was to press in Parliament for particular demands with relevance to the slate industry. As W.J. Parry explained in 1885, "we do not wish for anyone to look at the union as the instrument of a political party... but at the same time we are for the union to be felt in the political world". Parry steered the union into an active political role which he saw as being an important force in Gwynedd politics, for in order to win their demands the quarrymen had to ensure that they were sympathetically represented; "you must", Parry emphasised, "insist on men who will sympathise with you and will do something for you". In giving this advice, the political effects of the 1884 Reform Act were uppermost in his mind and he congratulated the quarrymen for "coming into possession of the right to use their voice in the choice of those men who in the future will legislate on their behalf. This is a priceless acquisition". (96)

The union continued to steer clear of explicitly stating a political allegiance, though the point of Parry's words must have been obvious to all. The union, in fact, though energetic in its denials of political bias, was never shy of political statements. In 1878 the union council agreed to organise a petition calling for the appointment of J.P.s who were 'in sympathy with the working class'; (971) in 1883 they sent a deputation to lobby Gladstone on electoral reform; (981) in 1886 the union urged further colonisation in a petition to Parliament; (993) in 1887 they condemned the opening of museums on the Sabbath; (100) in 1888 they sent a delegate to a Free Trade conference. (101) Nevertheless, the union's major campaigns were on sectionalist issues of direct relevance to the slate quarries though even these led them into more openly political stances: in March 1894, for example, the union condemned in no uncertain terms both the House of Lords and local Members of Parliament for the peers' action in removing a crucial clause from an act to defend workmen's interests. (102)

The union also campaigned on the dire economic condition of the slate industry, blaming the continuing depression in trade on the total lack of co-operation displayed by the quarry owners, most disturbing being the cut-throat cutting of prices as the masters competed for a share of the shrunken market. The union also accused the masters of a lack of drive, of failing to build up new export markets in the colonies and elsewhere. The advice met with some sympathy from smaller quarries facing difficulties as a result of the policies of the large concerns, but was ignored by the major

owners in the industry. A letter from W.J.Parry to all the owners in 1884 (103) had a limited success in that it did at least result in the owners meeting to discuss pricing policies, (104) but the union itself was not invited, being reminded that the state of the market and the price of slates was a question for the owners and not for the union. This was a view that the union's leadership refused to accept and they were consistently free with their advice on economic and managerial questions. Parry himself was probably the most intelligent and well-informed commentator on the state of the slate trade in the country, and it was to their subsequent cost that the owners consistently chose not to heed his advice.

The N.W.Q.U, therefore, was a largely campaigning union rather than one deeply involved in developing structures of collective bargaining or for conducting an aggressive industrial policy. This reflected not only the difficult conditions of the industry but also the marked predilection of the union's leadership. The union had an interesting leadership characterised above all by the fact that the moving spirits were not themselves quarrymen. The union's president for the first couple of years was John Lloyd Jones, an 'extensive quarry proprietor in the Nantlle Valley', (105) the General Secretary was W.J.Parry of Bethesda, a radical tradesman, (106) and other early members were schoolteachers and journalists, W.J.Williams (later to become General Secretary) J.O.Griffith (Ioan Arfon), J.J.Hughes and W.E.Williams. The Caernarfon bank manager Hugh Pugh and Ffestiniog surgeon David Thomas also played prominent roles in the first meetings. Some of these were to drop

out as the union grew, but W.J.Williams and W.J.Parry were to continue to play leading roles in the union until the late 1890s.

W.J.Williams was elected General Secretary in June 1876 and remained in substantial control of the union until his resignation in 1897. W.J.Parry served the union in many roles, first as General Secretary, then as President, Trustee and adviser until he, too, resigned in July 1898. (107) The only two quarrymen to play prominent roles in the early days of the union were the two Robert Parrys - Robert Parry, Ceunant, elected Vice-President in 1875 and President in 1880, and Robert Parry of the Caebraichycafn (Penrhyn) Lodge, elected Vice-President in 1880.

The predominant influence in the councils of the union, therefore, was that of Gwynedd's extremely active radical middle class and some, at least, of the union's policies sprang from that fact. Whatever the issue at stake, the union's propaganda was always the authentic, outraged voice of a frustrated, articulate, Nonconformist middle class struggling, as always, against the power and control of Anglican, Tory, land-owning quarry-owners. To a very large extent, of course, they were expressing the anger of a good many quarrymen; there was no sign until the end of the century of the future fissure between Labour and Liberal. They were the political leadership of Gwynedd radicalism, and radical quarrymen were, by and large, happy to follow their lead. This meant, however, that the N.W.Q.U. failed to give sufficient priority to the need for a positive industrial policy and the development of effective collective bargaining structures. Trade unionism is essentially about

bargaining, and while intransigent owners, in some instances, made this a virtual impossibility, this was by no means true of all quarries. The union never fully grasped this fact and made no real attempt to develop strong organisation where it really mattered, at the point of production. Only in the Penrhyn Quarries was there anything approaching tight trade union organisation, and this was often admitted shamefacedly by the union (and later downright denied). Trade unionism was conceived of as a statement of belief, a stand, rather than as a method of collective bargaining. Seen as a matter of preference rather than as an obligation, membership of the union was inevitably to remain low.

This situation caused strains within the N.W.Q.U. as well as disillusion with it. Not even the energetic and able W.J.Parry escaped without some criticism from within the union for his over-ready tendency to compromise in order to end conflict. His role in arriving at the unsatisfactory settlement to the Dinorwic Lock-Out in 1886 attracted some criticism (108) and the union council were moved to pass a vote of confidence in him in order to dispel some ' unsubstantiated fables ' being spread about his role in the dispute. (109) More serious was his disagreement with the Penrhyn strike committee during the 1896 - 7 dispute, (110) which eventually led to his severing of connections with the union's new leaders.

It was W.J.Williams, rather than W.J.Parry, however, who was the greatest subject of dispute within the union. Born in Bethesda in 1839, Williams did spend some time as a quarry worker when a boy, but he returned to full-time education, spent some time in the Normal College and qualified as a teacher, becoming headmaster

of the British School in Bethel. He later became a chartered accountant. He held several posts with the Caernarfon council and was for a time secretary of the local Liberal Association. (111) Elected General Secretary in 1877, he moved the union's headquarters to his own office in 1878 and shared his time between union work and his own business and political interests. There was an unsuccessful attempt to remove him in 1884 when delegates to the union's conference from Waenfawr and Ffestiniog proposed that the ' secretary should be chosen from amongst the quarrymen themselves'. (112) And he was criticised for his lack of activity during the Dinorwic Lock-out when he was more active in supporting the Liberal Party during the election than in assisting the locked-out quarrymen. (113) Two years later fairly detailed charges of inefficiency and mismanagement were brought against him on the union council, particularly serious being the fact that he had represented local businessmen in cases against quarrymen. He was ordered to stop this practice and also to put up a sign on his office door indicating that the room was the union's headquarters as well as being an accountant's office.

Following the failure of the wages campaign of 1892 - 3, Williams came under increasing pressure and there is no question that the campaign to elect a full-time organiser for the union which gathered momentum in the early 90s was a reflection of the increasing suspicion with which Williams was viewed. The final breach came in 1897 following the end of the Penrhyn dispute; the Penrhyn leaders claimed that Williams had undermined and effectively sabotaged the men's negotiations, (114) and a bitter struggle ensued to remove him. A new post

of Financial Secretary was created and its purpose, 'to uproot an old official', (115) was clearly understood. Williams refused to work with the new post (116) and in time resigned. Elected as Financial Secretary was the tough and able spokesman from Bethesda, W.H. Williams. (117)

W.J. Williams had never committed himself totally to the union and was always deeply involved in his other concerns and there is no question that the union suffered from his indifferent generalship. For not only did he fail to pursue the union's interests as energetically as he could have, but his presence was in some instances an actual hindrance to recruitment. In Dinorwic, in particular, there was widespread hostility towards him and it was reported as early as 1893 that some men were refusing to join the union until he was removed. (118)

It was not until the late 1890s, therefore, that the N.W.Q.U. developed an able and energetic quarryman as their leader. In the early 1880s the two Robert Parrys had exerted an influence, but their period of office had not been particularly successful and was later to be criticised by W.J. Parry when, in 1884, he was once again recalled to instil the union with some direction and energy. Referring to the previous four years of stagnation, Parry made a forceful attack during the 1885 Conference on indifference and inactivity: "the principles of union and brotherhood are good in themselves", he declared, "but useless if practical use is not made of them. They are beautiful to look at, but their value is in their practice. The principled inactive unionist is worth nothing to society." (119) A pointed critique of a philosophy of unionism which had gained much currency in the N.W.Q.U. Parry's own recipe for

action was an invigorated sectionalist Parliamentary campaign.

In 1874 the 'friends of the quarrymen' who had come to the men's assistance in founding and staffing their union gave as the reason for their intervention the prevailing fear of victimisation amongst the quarrymen, a fear well-based on the experiences of previous years. This was a valid reason, but it leaves unanswered the question of why no significant trade union leader, other than Robert Parry, who died at the relatively young age of 43 in 1884, (12Q) rose from the ranks of the quarrymen to lead the union until very nearly the end of the century. Victimisation and the fear of it cannot be a sufficient reason if only because not all quarrymen were in the desperate plight of the Dinorwic and Penrhyn men. More significantly, many quarrymen did play prominent roles in the union as annual Presidents and Vice-Presidents, roles that exposed them to all the dangers of victimisation but allowed them little continuing influence over the development of the union. There were many individual quarrymen, moreover, who demonstrated many times their willingness to risk and suffer victimisation for the sake of trade unionism in their own quarries - why not, therefore, for position and influence in the union itself?

For almost a quarter of a century the quarrymen allowed their union's course to be steered largely by men who were not themselves quarrymen and who had political and business interests outside of the union. These leaders were able and articulate exponents of radical Welsh Liberalism and they drew their policies and their attitudes from that radicalism rather than

from any trade union tradition of collective bargaining and regulated workplace relations. The union for them was another and important part of the general struggle of the people against landlordism and Anglicanism; the union's successes and failures were judged in relation to this general context rather than strictly in the light of the union's day-to-day effectiveness on the ground. Thus the union persistently interpreted the major battles in the quarries as being struggles for political and religious emancipation when in truth most of the struggles, while indeed being blows for freedom and against autocracy, were also firmly rooted in the level of wages and the nature of conditions in the quarries.

It was the union's consistent failure to develop a united industrial policy, linking its campaigning efforts to the day-to-day conflicts in the quarries which above all reflected the influence of its middle class leaders. For W.J.Parry and W.J.Williams the battle must have often seemed a battle of words to be fought not with industrial action but with acid newspaper articles and eloquent testimony to commissions and committees. Parry was himself a master propagandist, marshalling his facts, his arguments and his emotional appeals in an often brilliant fashion. Trade union negotiation, however, is not just a matter of arguments; it involves also the threat and the use of industrial power as a bargaining counter. The N.W.C.U's leadership never bargained with the threat of action as a weapon. With one minor exception, (121) the union never called or even threatened to call a strike. The campaign for higher wages, which seemed as if it might unite all the quarrymen in the early 1890s, was abandoned in favour of a move to collect

more information about existing wage rates in order to construct a more conclusive case for the men. Not one of the major disputes in the industry was called or organised by the union itself; it was the individual lodges, forced by conditions in their quarries, who invariably initiated and strove to control the action.

This was not, of course, a reflection on the leadership alone; it also to a large measure reflected the consciousness of the quarrymen themselves. Despite the often expressed complaints within the union, the majority of members were willing to support the policies of the dominant leaders until the mid-nineties. For they, too, were adherents of much the same radical Liberalism, with all that credo's cultural associations, as their leaders, and they shared with them similar views on the co-operation of Labour and Capital. It was not so much these 'moderate' beliefs which weakened the N.W.Q.U; until the growth of new unionism in the late 1880s these were the commonly held beliefs of most trade unionists throughout Britain. The weakness of the N.W.Q.U. lay in the fact that these moderate, consiliatory policies went hand in hand with a failure to grasp fully the importance of effective trade union organisation at the base. The union never even fully distinguished between members and non-members, a failure which did not encourage quarrymen to join. It was with pride that the union claimed that it represented non-unionists in negotiations. The lodges tried with varying degrees of success to sort out this confusion, but the union itself never stressed sufficiently the need for all quarrymen to join the union, not just as a matter of principle, but as the only sure guarantee of effective bargaining.

The union's relative inactivity and ineffectiveness on the bargaining front and its failure to define adequately membership of a trade union inevitably led to some disillusion and made it even more difficult to recruit new members. "We are presently under a wave of failure", reported the Penrhyn Lodge in 1889, "would it not be better to give up the union? Many of those who are paying are very soft, many of those who will not pay say that they are as good trade unionists as we are". (122)

The history of no group of workers is synonymous with the history of their trade union. This is peculiarly true of the quarrymen. There was, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a section of the quarrymen, a sizeable minority, who were committed trade unionists; there was also a smaller but still significant minority who were as bitterly opposed to the union. What is striking is that the majority of quarrymen, ready on occasion to struggle valiantly for what they considered to be their rights, paid only a lukewarm allegiance to the N.W.Q.U; they were prepared, at times, to join the organisation, but on the whole they viewed the union with indifference and at times with grave suspicion. Much of the reason for this lay in the nature of the industry and the attitudes of men and masters, but some of the blame must also rest with the N.W.Q.U. itself, with its structure, and with the character and policies of its leadership.

CHAPTER VII

The North Wales Quarrymen's Union

1874 - 1900: An Assessment.

1. Of these disputes ten were in three quarries: Moeltryfan, Cwmorthin and Penrhyn.
2. For N.W.Q.U. membership figures see Annual Report on Trade Unions, N.W.Q.U. Conference Reports and NWQU Minute Books (1874 - 80 in N(ational) L(ibrary) of W(ales) MS. 8736, and 1880 onwards in G(wynedd) A(rchieve) S(ervice), NWQU MSS.
3. NWQU Minute Book, September 1899.
4. Morgan Richards, Slate Quarrying and How to Make it Profitable (1881) p. 135 - 6.
5. M. Richards, op. cit., p. 138.
6. ibid.
7. D. Dylan Pritchard, 'Aspects of the Slate Industry in the Expansionist Period', Part 6. Quarry Manager's Journal (August 1944). p.71.
8. C & D Herald. 27. 5. 1876.

9. Hours were as long as eleven hours a day in Ffestiniog (NWQU Minute Book, 22. 3. 1876.)
10. C. & D. Herald, 29. 5. 1875.
11. NWQU Minute Book, 22. 3. 1876.
12. *ibid*, 22. 4. 1876. C. & D. Herald, 26. 5. 1877.
13. NWQU Minute Books, Jan - Feb, 1875; 30. 12. 1876. 5. 5. 1877.
14. Total trade union membership in Britain was halved from 8 million to 4 million between 1920 and 1934. H.Pelling, A History of British Trade Unions, (1963) p. 262.
15. NWQU Minute Books, 4. 5. 1878.
16. C. & D. Herald, May 1878.
17. 'The expansionist phase' was defined by D.Dylan Pritchard, the pioneer economic historian of the slate industry, as the period 1790 to 1877.
18. C. & D. Herald, 25. 1. 1879. (Letter from W.J.Parry)
19. NWQU Minute Books, 31. 8. 1878.
20. *ibid*. 30. 11. 1878.
21. C. & D. Herald, 25. 1. 1879; 22. 2. 1879.
The following month Dinorwic went back to four-day working.
22. *ibid*.. 1. 3. 1879.
23. *ibid*.. 24. 5. 1879.
24. *ibid*. 29. 5. 1880.
25. GAS, NWQU MSS, Union Roll Book, 1887 - 91.
26. M.Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
27. C. & D. Herald, 26. 5. 1877.
28. See D. Dylan Pritchard, 'Trade Unionism' Quarry Managers' Journal (January 1945), p.303; C.Parry, 'The North Wales Quarrymen's Union', and J.Lindsay, 'Background to Unionism', Chwareli a Chwarelwyr, (1974).

29. Settmakers' and Stoneworkers' Journal, (Jan.1903)
30. At least a further 21 workings had closed down during the previous decade.
31. Report of the Quarry Committee of Inquiry, 1893 - 4; Report of the Departmental Committee on Merionethshire Slate Mines, 1895.
Appendix. 5.
32. Union Roll Book, 1887 - 91.
33. *ibid.*
34. NWQU Minute Books.
35. Llyfr Cofnodion Cyfrinfa Rhif 1. Dinorwic, 19.2. 1890.
36. C.Parry, *op. cit.*, p.33.
37. David Thomas, Diolch am gael byw. (1968), p.22.
38. Departmental Committee upon Meirionethshire Slate Mines 1895. (Evidence of Owen Rowland Jones, 1359.)
39. Y Genedl Gymreig, 24. 5. 1882.
40. See, for example, Y Werin, 17. 6. 1893;
Hugh Lloyd, Hunangofiant Rybelwr. (1926)
41. They were driven out of the Dinorwic Quarry during the lock-out of 1885; Y Genedl Gymreig, 16. 12. 1885; see also C. & D. Herald, 27. 6. 1874.
42. Llyfr Cofnodion... Dinorwic, 5. 6. 1891.
43. N.L.W. MS. 8738 (3. 8. 1874.)
44. *ibid.*, 24. 7. 1874.
45. Which, being a variant of piece-work, was by no means exceptional in British industry.
46. For a fuller exposition of this argument,
See Chapter 3.
47. Y Rhedegydd, 20. 9. 1890.

48. Parry, op. cit., p. 13.
49. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 15.
50. Y Rhedegydd, 28. 2. 1891.
51. Parry, op. cit., p. 170.
52. Mining Journal, 10. 9. 1859. p. 639.
53. Our Gazette, (National Association of Slate Merchants and Slaters), October 1894. p.2.
54. GAS, Penrhyn Quarry MS. 496: see letter from E.A.Young to Lord Penrhyn, 7. 1. 1899.
Lord Penrhyn was also, of course, a major landowner with an annual rental from farms and cottages of some £28,000 (Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire, 1894, Appendix x.) Not including other business interests, he thus had an annual income at least one thousand five hundred times greater than that of any of the quarrymen he employed.
55. Parry, op. cit., p.7.
56. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 24. 4. 1874.
57. M.Richards, op. cit., p. 144.
58. C. & D. Herald, 10. 5. 1845.
59. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 9. 12. 1865.
60. U(niversity) C(ollege of) N(orth) W(ales), Bangor, MS. 2390 (Llyfr Cownt John Edwards Ffestiniog.) He drew, e.g. £1. 18s. 4d. from the Quarry Fund and £1. 3s. 0d. from the Oddfellows in July 1889.
61. NWQU Minute Books.
62. Y Genedl Gymreig, 15. 3. 1882.
63. UCNW, Bangor, MS. 5911 (Rhan o gofnodion am Streic y Llechwedd, Blaenau rffestiniog,) 11 & 21. 7. 1893; 2. 8. 1893.
64. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 3. 7. 1906.

65. NWQU Minute Book, June 1891.
66. ibid., October 1875.
67. C. & D. Herald, 26. 5. 1877.
68. ibid.
69. ibid.
70. ibid., 7. 6. 1879.
71. NWQU Minute Book, 27. 8. 1881; Y Genedl Gymreig, 30. 5. 1883.
72. Y Genedl Gymreig, 14. 5. 1884.
73. ibid., 20. 5. 1885.
74. C. & D. Herald, 29. 5. 1880.
75. This failure to develop a comprehensive benefits scheme plus the failure to build a strong centralised structure makes the NWQU much more like the Scottish rather than the English trade union model for the nineteenth century. See W.H.Fraser, Trade Unionism in Scotland. (1972.)
76. NWQU Minute Book, 6. 4. 1892.
77. ibid. 11. 6. 1892.
78. ibid., 25. 6. 1892.
79. ibid., 13. 7. 1892.
80. ibid., 5. 8. 1892.
81. ibid., 11. 3. 1893.
82. In July 1893, for example, they urged the Glynrhonwy men to go once more to their master before taking strike action. (ibid., 1. 7.1893).
83. Llyfr Cofnodion... Dinorwic, 23. 8. 1893.
84. ibid., 3. 4. 1890.
85. Pone Wyllt, Dinorwic, wanted to join the Miners' Union 'so that we can be one united army in defence as well as in attack'. ibid. 24. 1. 1890. Sixty men voted to join the

Miners' Union in yet another ballot in February 1890 (*ibid.*, 7. 2. 1890). In March 1890 the Secretary of the NWQU in fact wrote to the Lancashire Miners Federation enquiring about the possibilities of a merger. The Lancs. secretary Thomas Ashton suggested they apply to the North Wales Miners Association. The matter had not, however, been discussed by the NWQU executive. (Lancashire Miners Federation, Committee Meeting Minutes, 18. 3. 1890,)(I am indebted to John B. Smethurst for this reference.)

86. *ibid.* 24. 1. 1890.
87. C. Parry. *op. cit.*, p. 37.
88. NWQU Minute Book, 30. 9. 1878.
89. C. & D. Herald, 29. 5. 1880.
90. *ibid.*, 28. 5. 1881.
91. *ibid.*, May 1876.. See also NWQU Minute Book, 19. 5. 1876.
92. NWQU Minute Book, 29. 6. 1878.
93. *ibid.*, 8. 8. 1891.
94. M. Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
95. NWQU Minute Book, 29. 12. 1877.
96. Y Genedl Gymreig, 20. 5. 1885.
97. NWQU Minute Book, 23. 3. 1878.
98. *ibid.*, 29. 12. 1883; this move had been strongly opposed by the Penrhyn Lodge (see Penrhyn Minute Book, 21. 12. 1883.).
99. NWQU Minute Book. 8. 5. 1886.
100. *ibid.*, 24. 9. 1887.
101. *ibid.*, 23. 3. 1888.
102. *ibid.*, 3. 3. 1894.

103. ibid., 28. 6. 1884.
104. Y Genedl Gymreig, 20. 5. 1885.
105. C. & D. Herald, 26. 9. 1874. Morgan Richards,
another business man, appears to have been
the President for the first few months.
106. For a life of W.J.Parry see J.Roose Williams,
'Quarryman's Champion', Vols. 23 - 29. TCHS.
107. He had resigned from the union several times
before, but had always returned.
108. Llyfr Cofnodion... Dinorwic, 20. 1. 1888.
109. NWQU Minute Book, 20. 2. 1886.
110. See, e.g. N.L.W. D.R. Daniel MS 2496.
(Statement by W.H.Williams, Robert Davies,
and Henry Jones.)
111. U.C.N.W. Coetmor MS. 44, p.50.
112. Y Genedl Gymreig, 14. 5. 1884.
113. This and other charges were levelled against
him in June 1887 (NWQU Minute Book, 4. 6. 1887)
114. The charges were detailed in the Statement by
W.H.Williams, etc., (N.L.W. D.R.Daniel MS 2496.)
115. NWQU Minute Book, 28. 8. 1897.
116. ibid., 25. 9. 1897.
117. W.H.Williams, 1848 - 1917, Financial Secretary
NWQU, a formidable quarrymen's leader from
the Penrhyn Quarries. See E.M.Humphreys,
'W.H.Williams', Gwyr Enwog Gynt (1950),
pp. 113 - 23; John Williams, 'Rynys,
Braslun Buddugol o William H.Williams, Arafon 1896.
118. Llyfr Cofnodion... Dinorwic, 24. 9. 1893.
119. Y Genedl Gymreig, 20. 5. 1885.
120. Robert Parry, 1841 - 84, 'a deep philosopher
and a faithful and hard working deacon' from
Ceunant, Llanrug. Y Genedl Gymreig, 9. 1. 1884.

121. The exception was the Rhos, Capel Curig,
dispute, 1877.

122. NWQU Minute Book, 27. 4. 1889.

The Penrhyn Lock-Out. 1900 - 03.

1. Y Streic Fawr.

In May 1899 the N.W.Q.U was one of forty-four unions to affiliate to the General Federation of Trade Unions, a body set up under the sponsorship of the T.U.C. to offer unions

" a scheme of mutual insurance against being involved in a dispute too protracted for their own funds" (1), a wise move for a weak union whose total membership fluctuated at the time around 1,000 and with business to finish with a determined employer. The move must be seen as a precaution, however, and in no way as preparation by the union for another battle. Membership in Caebraichycafn had fallen drastically since 1897, contributions from the quarry declining from £1,075 for 1897 to only £261 for 1899. (2) In the first quarter of 1900 there were only 369 union members in the quarry out of the 2,700 men at work. (3) The dismissal of union leaders rather than any defiance from the men, marked these years and it seemed most unlikely that battle could soon be re-joined with Lord Penrhyn.

The management's hard line since 1897 seemed to be paying off and in April 1900 E.A.Young dealt what he thought would be a severe blow to the union - he forbade the collection of dues in the quarry. Because of the scattered homes of many of the men, the collecting of dues, it was thought, would be impossible. But the move misfired for, faced with this threat of the annihilation of their union, the men rallied back; dues

Collecting centres in Bethesda became recruiting centres for the union, in the next six months 1,197 men joined the local lodge and by the end of the year the lodge had almost 2,000 members. (4)

With the union strong once again in the Quarry and the issues which had precipitated the 1896 - 7 conflict as hotly in dispute as ever and with the quarry men's resentment fuelled by the management's unremitting behaviour since 1897 the peace between men and master in Bethesda was precarious indeed. By the end of November war had once again been declared.

The Penrhyn Lock-out had its immediate causes in a series of confusing incidents starting in mid-October 1900. The trouble began with a disagreement between fourteen men working on Ponc Ffridd and their overseeing underagent concerning the contract of two of the men. The fourteen refused to work on the Saturday and were suspended for three days. A fortnight later the fourteen were told that they were no longer to work on the same Ponc but that they were to be scattered through the Quarry and their bargains let in one contract to a 'big contractor'. When that contractor appeared on the Ponc, however, he was threatened, beaten up and thrown out of the quarry. A week later a similar incident happened elsewhere in the quarry and proceedings were started against 26 men. (5) Three hundred dragoons entered the area in case more serious trouble should break out. (6)

The twenty six men were dismissed from the Quarry before trial and, as most were thought to be innocent by the rest of the quarrymen, feeling ran very high. When the case came up in Bangor on November 5th the whole body of quarrymen marched to the town in their support.

For this insubordination all the workmen were suspended for a fortnight. Of the twenty-six tried twenty were found not guilty.

When the suspensions were up on November 19th the men returned to the quarry and bargains were let. It became apparent, however, that eight poncs were not being let; on the 22nd 2,000 men refused to work until 800 fellow quarrymen had also been let bargains.

E.A.Young, the quarry manager, ordered them to ' either go on working or leave the quarry quietly '. By mid-day the quarry was deserted apart from the stewards and a small group of workers numbering 85 in all: the rest of the men, including every single skilled quarryman, had taken their tools and left.

Of the 2,800 men who walked out of Lord Penrhyn's quarry on November 22nd 1900, 1,000 were not to return until after November 1903, another 1,000 were never to return.

In the ensuing three years both sides produced a mass of printed material to justify their stand and to expose their opponents; few negotiations can ever have been conducted so publicly and so fruitlessly. (7)

The first negotiations, from the 18th to the 21st December 1900, took place in London through the intervention of Clement Edwards, editor of the Daily News . The men's demands were:

1. The right freely to elect spokesmen from the ranks of the men in the quarry to discuss grievances with the management from time to time.
2. The right of the men during the dinner hour to discuss matters among themselves in the quarry. (8)

3. The reinstatement of certain victimised leaders.
4. The establishment of a minimum wage.
5. The punishment of unjustifiable conduct on the part of foreman and officials towards the men.
6. The introduction, experimentally, of a system of co-operative piecework in place of work hitherto done under contract.
7. The humanizing of the harsh rules of discipline, and the reduction of the punishments for breaches of them.
8. The reintroduction of the annual holiday on May 1st.
9. More democratic control of the Quarry Sick Club. (9)

Nothing was agreed on at the conference but the terms offered by Penrhyn were~~put~~ to a secret ballot; they were rejected by 1,707 votes to 77.

By December a considerable number of men had left to work elsewhere, most of them to the coalfields of the South, altogether some 1,400 - 1,600 men left Bethesda during the dispute. Through the spring of 1901 things were relatively quiet apart from a mass meeting at Easter (10) but in June excitement returned to the area as rumours intensified that the quarry was about to re-open. (11) On June 11th Penrhyn did open his quarry and some 500 men, including 242 quarrymen, went back to work. Demonstrations, meetings and some violence followed. The anti-blackleg violence fell into a continuing pattern of threats and minor attacks. On Wednesday, July 30th, on the pretext that 300 wild striker youths were returning from South Wales, 200 infantry and

60 cavalry were moved into Bangor; On Saturday August 2nd, 100 East Yorkshire and South Staffs. Infantry came into Bethesda itself, followed by 30 Dragoons. (12) The trouble that followed was minimal and the troops left. Attacks and threatening behaviour toward the blacklegs, however, continued with arrests taking place regularly; at the beginning of September twenty-six more came before the magistrates in Bangor.

On New Year's Eve 1902 (13) more serious trouble flared in the town and 100 police and 150 soldiers came in and some 27 arrests were made. In February 1902 the Caernarfonshire County Council intervened in an attempt to arbitrate. They held several meetings with the men's representatives and with E.A. Young, the quarry manager; in the face of Penrhyn's refusal to be interviewed, however, their peace moves failed. (14)

By June 1902 there were some 700 men back in the quarry, (15) the weekly meetings became less well attended. (16) Some antagonism toward the committee became apparent (17) but nevertheless over 2,000 men were still out and violence could still flare up, as it did in early September. (18) At the end of September Lord Penrhyn agreed to meet a deputation of the men if a 'quarry committee is not discussed'. (19) When, however, he refused to talk about "representation" at all the deputation was called off.

In December 1902 the Board of Trade was asked to intervene under the terms of the Conciliation Act, (20), but as it had done in 1896 - 97, the Board refused to act on the grounds that Lord Penrhyn would not be bound by the Act and that both parties had to ask for intervention. (21) In March 1903 Penrhyn instigated

libel proceedings against W.J. Parry, Parry was forced to pay £500 costs but as an aftermath to the court proceedings Penrhyn's lawyer, Sir Edward Clarke introduced negotiations with the men's leaders. The negotiations were no more than an attempt at an organised return to work, no demands were made except that there be no victimisation. Substantial agreement was reached but, at the last moment, Penrhyn withdrew his confidence in Clarke; (22) Penrhyn wanted nothing less than unconditional surrender.

Also in March 1903 William Jones, M.P. for Caernarfonshire Arfon, brought the matter up in the House of Commons moving an "Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance". (23) The debate attracted a dozen speakers including G. Balfour and Lloyd George. On April 2nd Campbell-Bannerman asked a question in the House on the dispute and the Liberals pressed for a full scale debate on, as they saw it, the Government's failure to implement the 1896 Conciliation Act. (24) On April 27th the Liberals proposed a vote of censure on the Government,

"That in view of the grave social and public interests involved in the continuance of the industrial dispute at Bethesda, this House condemns the inaction of His Majesty's Government.. (25)

The motion was proposed for the Opposition by Asquith and opposed by Gerald Balfour, President of the Board of Trade. In the long debate that followed the Prime Minister, amongst others, showed he was well briefed on the matter. The Tories treated the motion as

"merely a political manoeuvre of the most transparent character, designed partly to occupy a little time, and partly to catch a few socialist votes

for a party which stands sadly in need of them." (26) This judgement was largely true, but whatever their intentions, the Liberals failed to move the Government into any action and the situation in Bethesda remained the same.

In April 1903 the committee made a desperate plea for arbitration, (27) inviting the Prime Minister, Lord Roseberry, Chamberlain, Lord James of Hereford, or anyone appointed by H.R.H. Prince of Wales or H.M. Government to intervene as arbitrator. Penrhyn would hear nothing of it. The lock-out continued, somewhat aimlessly, with much recrimination and confusion, the men could see that they were not pushing Penrhyn an inch. A growing number began to emigrate to the U.S.A. (28) Many applied secretly for work. (29) In late September the General Federation of Trade Unions stopped their payments to the men, (30) later in October the G.F.T.U. declared that as far as they were concerned " the dispute is over". (31) In early November a meeting in Bethesda voted narrowly to return to work. (32) One by one, and quite arbitrarily, some of them were taken back. By December the situation in Bethesda was " no work, no union, no fund.. every fountain has dried up". (33) The traditional Saturday market closed down, (34) as the year drew to a close poverty intensified and fever closed down the schools. Men were allowed to trickle back into the quarry but a thousand men were never to return; in 1907, four years later, the working force in the quarry was still only 1,800, (35) in 1910 the population of Bethesda was still well below the 6,000 it had been in 1899. (36)

The issues which underlay the three year confrontation in Penrhyn and which motivated the two sides were essentially the same as those which affected the 1896 - 7 dispute and the two disputes shall here be discussed together. The issues at stake were many, complicated and deeply rooted not only in the Penrhyn Quarries but also in the attitudes and beliefs of the parties involved. Behind the slogan of "the right of combination" there lay claims concerning money, efficiency and control as well as principle.

"This is not a quarrel," protested D.R. Daniel in May 1902, "between master and workers concerning some halfpenny an hour, more wages, it is a hard struggle for independence, for freedom, and for humanity". (37)

By 1902 his remarks rung true for by then the sole issue in contention was the principle of representation. But money had been the most important ingredient in the recipe for the conflict, and its taste was to be found on many of the 'principles' involved. In the months preceeding the 1896 - 7 stoppage the men's demand for an increase in wages had been central. In July 1896 the men's committee submitted their demand for an increase in wages to Lord Penrhyn:

"We have come to an unanimous decision to ask for 5/5 a day as standard wages for quarrymen, miners and sawyers in the mill and to have, when they fail to reach the standard on the letting, 4/6 a day; and that other classes are to follow in the same ratio". (38)

Claims were also made on behalf of rybelwrs, stonemasons, "apprentices" and the men working in the mill and the yard. This was their first and basic set of demands but the simple issue of increased wages was quickly complicated by a series of other, interlinked, issues. The question of contracts, of rybelwrs, and disputes about efficiency, control and above all, about freedom and combination, came to dominate the negotiations.

A month after their first demand was submitted the men's committee received a note from E.A. Young refusing virtually all their requests and, angered by this rebuff, the men drew up a longer and more comprehensive list of complaints. Their major attack was on the

" system of letting contracts that has lately been introduced to the quarry". (39)

The system of letting sections of the quarry in large contracts (40) to sub-contractors who would then employ the various classes of quarrymen was a system deeply offensive to the men; one of the major complaints of 1896 - 7, the system caused the violent snapping of temper in November 1900 which precipitated the 1900 - 03 struggle.

The men argued that the contract system was exploitative, unjust and inefficient. Exploitative because a middle-man was introduced into the system who creamed off the excess created by his quarrymen employees, this was the " sweat shop principle" to which the men often referred. Unjust because the contracts were not always let to " practical quarrymen " resulting in " many workmen of experience and ability " being kept " in a state of dependency on inferior workmen to themselves". Inefficient because the inexperienced men at work on the contracts took, according to the men's committee, good slate rock

" over the tips " instead of making slates from it. (41)

Related to the contracts issue was that of the "rybelwrs", those men and boys not in bargains, who "freelanced" around the quarry, often reduced to begging crews of quarrymen for work. The men demanded the end of this system and the regularising of the position of the rybelwrs by granting them monthly lettings on a poundage related to that of the quarrymen proper; they should be given bargain s on the rock then being worked by the contractors.

These were, of course, valid enough demands in themselves which had given rise to a considerable resentment and sense of injustice among the quarrymen. But they were also linked to the men's demand regarding the lowness, and uncertainty, of wages. It is clear that the demand for the ^{regularisation} of the position of the rybelwr, resulting in part from the miserable standing of this class in the quarry, owed something also to the feeling among quarrymen that in many situations in the quarry the low-paid rybelwr, who received no poundage on blocks sent to the mill and whose poundage, tonnage, and yard price was lower than the quarryman's, was used in preference to the more expensive labour of the quarryman.

In the question of contracts the situation was even more clear and was nicely stated by Lord Penrhyn in his reply to the men made during his meeting with the committee on August 17th, 1896:

" it seems to me that your real objection to the contract system on a large scale is founded upon the feeling that the work now done by contract would be carried on at a greater profit to the

quarrymen if it was sub-divided into single bargains".(42) Lord Penrhyn had had some research carried out into the matter and he had ascertained that the working of 40 badrock bargains over thirteen quarry months had resulted in a cost per ton of slate of $2/6\frac{1}{4}$. Worked under contract the cost had been only a third of that sum per ton.

The men based their demand for an increase in wages on the generally improving state of the slate market in the late 1890s, a market which compensated for the falling away of foreign sales with a vigorous boom in the building industry at home, a boom which created a state of virtual slate famine. Quarries were re-opened in 1895 and 1896, men taken on and advances made in wages; five per cent in both Penrhyn and Dinorwic in 1895, threepence a day in several Ffestiniog quarries. The five per cent in Penrhyn, however, was not added to the standard wage but was a percentage of the wages bill after costs had been deducted. Whenever a reduction was made, the men pointed out, it was a percentage of the standard " and we cannot consider any advance satisfactory.. if it is not done on the same principle". (43)

Young and Penrhyn argued in reply that the men's references to a booming market were mistaken since not only the price of slate but also " the cost of production had risen, and continues to do so". (44) It is difficult to understand on what premise this argument could be based as profits were certainly booming at this time and production in 1899 finally topped the record year of 1877. One can only speculate that Penrhyn and his manager, E.A.Young, were determined to prevent the NWQU riding to success, membership, and higher wages on the

crest of this boom as they had done on the boom of the mid-seventies; a determination fed by the realisation that the bargain system on which slate-quarrying was founded was a vastly more costly system, both in terms of money and of control, than the contract system which the management was clearly trying to introduce on a large scale.

Such straightforward accounting, resulting in a straightforward conflict, was not, however, the crux of the Penrhyn dispute even though it provided the fundamental division of financial interest between man and master. Money provided the stage but the drama was played out with the actors mouthing other lines, and, like in any good play, the words were open to several interpretations.

Very rapidly the original locking of antlers over the question of wages and wages systems gave way to what to many outside observers appeared to be no more than a meaningless and infuriating, if also entertaining, slaughter by semantics. Penrhyn counter-attacked not on economics but on ground much more remote but vital, he encircled the men's detailed demands, pouncing on loose ends; there he chose to fight, knowing full well that the loose ends led to the heart of the matter. He accused the committee of being liars because they had stated that contracts were "newly introduced" to the quarry; they were not, he pointed out, and moved on not to nail the lie but to accuse the "liars" for making it. In a series of long documents he countered the men's demands, point by point, with tightly and well argued defences; he mounted his own attack on different terrain, on a question of "principle": the principles of loyalty

and obedience to the employer.

It could be argued that he chose this rhetorical ground because justice and logic supported the quarrymen's case. Probably so. But such an explanation is not sufficient, and the length of the struggle cannot be understood in such terms alone: Penrhyn was dedicated to the defeat of anything resembling effective trade unionism in his quarries, because of the possible threat to his profits, but far more because of its threat to his power and his standing. What he refused to countenance was not the men's demands but the fact that they had been submitted by a committee elected by the men which, however much that committee might deny it, clearly signified the presence in his quarry of the muscular arm of a trade union.

Lord Penrhyn and, even more, so, his manager, E. A. Young, were committed to the ideas of 'free labour' and became in time, the heroes of the anti-trade union lobby in Britain, hailed as the vanguard of a new employer's offensive; a role they were clearly delighted to play. Penrhyn's attitudes and behaviour, however, were also deeply rooted in the politics of North Wales.

George Sholto Gordon Douglas-Pennant had just celebrated his sixtieth birthday when the first dispute broke in 1896 but he was by no means unaccustomed to being a public figure. The Penrhyn family had won the Caernarfonshire parliamentary seat in 1841 and Penrhyn's father, the 1st Baron Penrhyn, had been the member from that date to 1866 when he transferred the responsibility to his son. Penrhyn held the seat, as a Conservative, for two years, before losing it in a historic and bitterly fought election in 1868 to the Liberal, Love Jones Parry. Six years later Penrhyn fought the seat

again and this time re-captured it; he lost it for good in 1880 in an electoral contest which clearly made a deep impression upon him; he felt that he had been betrayed by the electors, who included, of course, some of "his" quarrymen, and he made a venomous attack upon them which the Welsh press never allowed him to forget. "Caernarfonshire", he railed,

"stands on top of the list, by this electoral struggle, as a lying county.... 1,143 electors, by their deception, have tried to prove that there is no trust any longer to be placed in the word of a Welshman in this county". (45)

He did not absent himself from local politics as a result of this defeat, however, and he served as a Justice of the Peace and later as a Conservative County Councillor for Llandegai.

A political activist, Penrhyn was also a very rich man with powerful friends. Educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, he was a colonel of the Fourth Regiment, Royal Welsh Fusiliers. When he inherited the Penrhyn Estate from his father in 1886 he found himself in possession of one of the largest landed estates in Wales, over 72,000 acres in all, worth an annual rental of £27,000, (46) and one of the most profitable concerns in the land, the Penrhyn Quarry, which it was estimated, produced some £100,000 profit annually. (47) A direct income, quite apart from interest on investments, many thousand times greater than that of any of his quarrymen. He was often away from the family home in Penrhyn Castle and spent much time in his London home near Hyde Park corner or on his other estate in Stony Stetford. (48) During the first month of the 1896-7 dispute Penrhyn's

guest at Penrhyn Castle was Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. (49)

Penrhyn's political career had been interrupted by the newly blossoming power of Welsh Liberalism, in an age of political transformation he found himself, despite his wealth and his power, defending a crumbling order. He had refused to accept the verdict of 1868 and had, indeed, successfully turned back the tide in 1874, but only temporarily. Against him he saw ranged Welsh Nonconformity, energetic middle class radicals, land reformers and his own "disloyal" quarrymen. He fought them all. Above all he was nervous of any political movement that actually threatened his economic standing, land reform and trade unionism in particular. In 1886 he founded, and was chairman of, the North Wales Property Defence Association, a body set up to counter "the incessant interference of outside agitators... and the open encouragement given by a large portion of the Welsh press to schemes practically of confiscation". He gave evidence to the Royal Commission on Land in Wales in 1893 when he attacked, in particular, the virulent anti-landlordism of the radical Welsh press. (50)

Penrhyn placed his disputes with the quarrymen in the context of his general struggle against the forces of radicalism surrounding him; that was one important reason for his willingness to suffer the huge losses involved in the closure of his quarries. His battle with the NWQU was one more skirmish in a general war; to lose the skirmish was not a local defeat only, restricted to the quarry, it was of far more general import.

Even when the split between W.J. Parry and the

new leaders of the union became apparent in 1897 Penrhyn saw no significance in the dispute; as far as he was concerned Parry and his ilk, energetic Welsh businessmen and radicals, were still the main enemy, the quarrymen no more than their stage army, and he hunted Parry remorselessly, with all the considerable legal power at his disposal, during his famous libel suit against him in 1902. (51)

Trade unionism, he had no doubt, was another insidious weapon in radicalism's armoury; implanted in his works by those who wished to undermine his authority and as he understood it, his right to run his own quarries as he wished. As we have seen elsewhere (52) the power wielded by the union committee in Penrhyn should not be underestimated, if it might seem impressive to us it appeared outrageous to Penrhyn.

Outrageous not only because of its effects on wages and conditions of labour but also because trade unionism disrupted the nature and hold of his own power system. The quarrymen of Bethesda had for long been divided between those who sought a collective and aggressive answer to their plight and those who sought instead to survive by ingratiating themselves with Penrhyn's agents. The grip of trade unionism explicitly challenged the latter path, denied the sovereignty of managerial authority and rejected the spoils of paternalism as sufficient compensation for their complaints.

Penrhyn's father had built and provided the Quarry Hospital, he himself contributed £200 annually towards the Quarry Club; widows of quarrymen killed at work were granted small pensions as were some men who had grown old in his employment, those still capable

of work were given light tasks in the quarry along with men who had received injury. Penrhyn's wealth and power allowed him to bestow many favours; such favours, and the "loyalty" which was exhibited by those who wished to earn them, was the system upon which Penrhyn's control of his men had long relied.

When the quarrymen rebelled in disciplined formation they rejected not only the terms of employment but also the paternalistic power structure. In 1874 the men's leaders had made it perfectly clear to Penrhyn's father that they were,

" perfectly willing that his lordship should keep his charities to himself - if those in any way interfere with him in his giving us proper wages".

But the roots of Penrhyn's power went deep and his paternalism maintained its controlling presence in the quarry. When the final rupture came in 1900 Penrhyn saw this as his opportunity to change the working system in the quarry and also dismiss, not merely the leaders, but all those who paid allegiance to any power system other than his own. The 'excluded-list' (53) drawn up during the dispute makes it perfectly clear that all those not actively, or at least passively, loyal to Penrhyn and his management and his system were to be excluded from the quarry; trade unionism was to be surgically removed in an operation which called for not only the cutting out of the diseased organs but also of all the surrounding tissue suspected of being infected. In this operation, there was a high risk of killing the patient, his permanent disability was guaranteed. For the Penrhyn lock-out not only shattered a community it also

dealt a crippling blow to the Welsh slate industry; with the world's largest slate quarry either closed or producing at only a fraction of its capacity, buyers of slate looked elsewhere, particularly to the U.S.A. and, more ominously, to tiles, for their roofing materials. (54) Penrhyn considered it a price worth paying.

In this ambitious project, to nurture a new generation of obsequious quarrymen, Penrhyn was ably assisted by his hand-picked manager Emilius Alexander Young, a London accountant dedicated to 'business methods', who provided the bourgeois cutting edge to his lordship's aristocratic pretensions. Young was in day to day control of the quarry and of the disputes and bore considerably responsibility for the course of events particularly as Penrhyn himself was often absent from North Wales.

Young's position was brutally simple:

'Neither you nor I can force men to work on Lord Penrhyn's terms - nor can the men force Lord Penrhyn to employ them upon those terms - nothing remains to be done. Those who prefer working elsewhere are free to do so, and on the contrary those who are willing to work for Lord Penrhyn are free to apply and if approved (Young's emphasis) can start at once. Our battle is for freedom!'. (55)

Young could not understand the reluctance of the quarrymen to accept the strict work discipline he imposed, 'the more I try and introduce business principles', he grieved, 'the more they rebel'. (56) He was also unsympathetic towards the Welsh in general, considering them 'childish

and ignorant', easily irritated and making poor foreman material. (57)

A great many issues, therefore, stemmed from the men's demand in July 1896 for 5/6 a day: issues of economics certainly, but issues also of control and principle. To break the patronage system and challenge the divine right of the employer the men needed organisation, to negotiate for wage increases and to defend the bargain system they needed organisation. The battle was fought therefore on the 'principle of combination'; Penrhyn claimed he had no objection to men joining a trade union as long as they did not expect him to negotiate with it, the men pointed out that that was the whole point.

On the men's side too, however, deeper issues were involved, attitudes which were able to sustain the massive sacrifices they were willing to make. The men opposed Young's regime because it usurped their position as skilled quarrymen, curtailed what they considered to be their rights and promoted those whose skill lay not in treating the rocks but in flattery.

Most of the arguments of the men in the first months of the 1900 - 03 stoppage concerned the 'attitudes of the management'. (58) One of the ten demands of 1900 called for the 'punishment of unjustifiable conduct on the part of foreman and officials towards the men'. The quarrymen refused to take any more, refused to any longer 'suffer the vanity, harshness, arrogance and injustice of the under-agents'. (59)

The quarryman had a high regard for his own skills and a decided opinion as to the respect that they deserved.

As W.W. Jones, President of the NWQU exclaimed, 'if Mr. Young thought that he could work the quarry on the same principle of government as dockwork or brickworking he was greatly mistaken'. (60)

By 1900 the attack on this craft pride had become intolerable, for not only was it being physically undermined by the extension of the contract system, it was also being daily assaulted by the alleged boorishness of Penrhyn's management.

It was not a change in temperament alone that the men called for, they also demanded " the humanizing of the harsh rules of discipline", which, there is no doubt, had been considerably tightened up in the previous years; some traditional customs had been forbidden(61) but more significantly there was an intensive effort to ensure that the men kept regular working hours, the most objected to rule being the one which stated that if 15 minutes late in the morning a quarryman would lose two days pay. Strict rules as to hours interfered with a man's responsibilities and his independence: a father claimed he could not visit a dying son without being penalised; (62) traditional events such as funerals, always attended by hundreds of men in quarry districts, were interfered with. (63)

Where the quarrymen did concur with Penrhyn was in the importance they attached to the struggle. It was not seen as a dispute, which could be won or lost, but as the struggle which had to be won. The idea of a tactical defeat, to return and fight another day, did not occur to them, or, if it did, it was never seriously contemplated; this was 'life's battle'(64) in which men staked their whole identity. The prize was

a 'human' life, defeat meant a loss of manhood, not in the act of defeat but in the conditions which would then have to be lived and worked under. The quarrymen knew that the lives Lord Penrhyn expected them to live were not only hard and often miserable, they were also degrading. Their own industrial practice, bound up with their definition of their craft, made them conscious of the loss of freedom implicit in 'business methods', in the constraints tightening around them at work; they knew well enough that the morning hooter and the insulting under-agent were the demands of an employer and not an immutable fact of life. To go back to Penrhyn's slate trap was to accept alienation's bribe and sell one's humanity.

Other than W.H. Williams, the leading local leader was Henry Jones a reflective, reliable and somewhat autocratic man who was, paradoxically, an Anglican. (65) He continued to attend church though 'the vicar passes my house to go to the house of others'. (66) Henry Jones was a member of the executive committee of the NWQU and in May 1903 he became the union's vice-chairman; (67) he chaired all the mass meetings in Bethesda making lengthy addresses at each one.

The other more prominent members of the men's committee were Owen Griffith (Gerlan), Vice Chairman (68) and Griffith Edwards, Secretary, (69) Edwards also being on the general council of the NWQU (70). Other members were R.G. Pritchard, who became an auditor of the NWQU in 1902; (71) R.J. Jones; William Williams (William Aber) a Vice Chairman of the NWQU; (72) J. Williams, 'Rynys, victimized in May 1898 (73) and John Roberts. (74)

With W.H. Williams and D.R. Daniel these men provided the leadership of the struggle locally, often assisted by the eloquence of W.W. Jones, or 'Cyrus' as he was commonly known, the President of the NWQU and an enigmatic figure, who though foremost in the struggle of labour was primarily dedicated to 'temperance, freedom and morality'. (75) Cyrus was a methodist deacon in his native Nantlle Valley and his main pre-occupation was religion, and yet in the debates during the lock-out he showed a remarkable political awareness, veering more than any of his comrades towards socialism.

Cyrus, W.H. Williams and the others expressed the anger and frustration of the men, they also provided a stubborn and unrelenting leadership. They took an intimacy with the absolute, gained over many years in Hermons and Jerusalems, into an industrial struggle which even at its inception held out little enough promise of success; but once the conflict had become inevitable it had also become essential, if only for all the indignities of the past. The sense of moral certainty which formed the hard core of so many servile appearances, and the vastly over-developed sense of principle, the more precious for its forced contravention in the pursuit of sustenance within Penryn's power, these had been goaded so often, for too long screamed in silent outrage, submitted on bended knees in gloomy Hermons and Jerusalems, like W.H. Williams himself "fallen on his knees one hand on the seat, the other on the lamp post". (76) The heroes of the Old Testament strode through these men's brains like feared and recently mourned ancestors; when the cruel compulsion came to act it demanded, and received, a rush of allegiance. It was from this position of rewarding

sacrifice and joyous defiance that the sail-trimming caution of W.J. Parry and W.J. Williams in 1897, had appeared so squalid.

The Daily News commented in 1901 that,

" They do not complain of their wages of of their hours,. The burden of their complaint is the spirit of their treatment. 'Let us be treated like men' is the supreme form of their demand". (77)

The Penrhyn quarrymen certainly did complain of their wages, and of their hours, and of a good deal besides, but the Daily News correspondent was nevertheless right in his emphasis. One of the men themselves, John D. Jones, Salem, explained:

" A man must be respected as a man and as a worker by every squire and lord in this country. This present struggle has bred men in Bethesda that will never more bend to Baal. We have breathed the fresh air of freedom. The castles of oppression will come down one day". (78)

3. Social Control.

(a) Pressure.

Despite its tradition of Union organisation the explosion of 1900 came not from any formally organised channels but from below, using methods which appear quite alien to those of British trade unionism in the twentieth century. When 14 men threatened with having their bargains replaced by contract work reacted in November 1900,

there was no effective Union committee of any kind to turn to. The Union, though at that time attracting a large membership, had no influence with the management at all, they were powerless to stop the contractors. The men therefore defended themselves in another way: they warned the contractors Richard Hughes and Edward Williams not to come near their bargains. Williams ignored their previous warnings and the threats thrown at him when he arrived, consequently he was attacked, chased round the galleries, beaten up and thrown physically out of the quarry. (79)

The following week events escalated. Richard Hughes, the other contractor made the unfortunate slip of, in a newspaper interview, calling the men 'loafers'. That night the following poster went up around the town

' To the Loafers of Chwarel Y Penrhyn - take notice.
Monday night, October 29th, there will be a
procession starting at 10 o'clock from Adwy-y-Pant,
Bethesda, to visit a certain place in the district
when we shall pay our debts to the arch-loafer.
It is hoped that all will be over at midnight.
Everyone with an interest in the present disturbances
is invited to attend with the appropriate
weapons'. (80)

Hughes fled and escaped the planned attack; three days later he returned to the quarry accompanied by his three sons. He was beaten up and escorted, bleeding, back to Bethesda by a singing crowd of several hundred. The crowd returned to the quarry to seek a supervisor, Thomas Price, who, found hiding in nearby woods, was given the same treatment as Hughes. He was being escorted in the direction of the river when he was saved

from his fate by the local constabulary. The men then returned again to the quarry to seek out two other officials, Messrs. Ellis and Pennant Roberts, but these had swallowed their bravado and flown..

The men's leaders came to speak critically of this outburst of violence, especially under pressure from the General Federation of Trades Unions who considered that

'Whatever the grievances under which they were labouring may have been, physical force was no remedy, was opposed to Trade Union principles, and must be wholly condemned.' (81)

But at the time of the incidents the quarrymen seem to have been overwhelming in their approval, a local Liberal paper commented rather incredulously,

'All the workers, the old, the middle aged and the young, are unanimous in their belief in the propriety of the strange course taken on Thursday'. (82)

Looking at the nature of this 'strange course' might help us to understand why it took place. Its nature points, I think, to a pre-trade union pattern of employees' self assertion and defence. This is brought out clearly in the second poster to be circulated in the area. It read,

"Dear countrymen

As we have sent the Archbafer away from the quarry as well as his two sons, I am greatly hoping that we shall give them a similar

welcome if they dare come to the quarry again, that is, any one of the three diawliaid. (83)

I am thinking that there are three more of the stewards who need to be treated in the same way, because of their behaviour in the past...

namely stiward, ceg fawr,(84) ...marker,

the one who was instrumental in suspending four of our fellow workers for four days when they had done nothing wrong, for this and for several other reasons this is the time and the most promising moment to pay him back. And also..... who, say the people working under him, has been a terrible oppressor.

I am,

One who has suffered". (85)

No social generalisation at all is apparent here. The violence was to be directed not against the management as such, or against the system of working but rather against particular individuals singled out to be punished for their personal behaviour and their specific crimes..

So why did this violence take place and why did it take this form? The first point is easier to answer: as the men's Committee was quick to point out, this is the sort of thing that happens if you do not have proper Union representation, grievances are allowed to build up, men are too scared to take their complaints individually to the management, and even if they were not they would find no redress; without an acceptable negotiating machinery men continued working until the situation became intolerable and then they exploded; in truth a Committee would be " a Local Board of Conciliation" restraining men from rebellion. (86)

The nature of the path taken, however, especially its somewhat ritualized aspects, needs further explanation. The posters, the threats, the selective use of terror, the march to the river reminds one more of early nineteenth century industrial activity (87) or of rural rebellion, than of a trade dispute in the 1900s. Tom Ellis, M.P., who knew Wales well, thought Nonconformity and

industrialisation had not quite completed their transforming task,

"The old turbulence is gone, though exciting moments in the tithe war and coal strike showed that the hot Celtic blood still needs restraint". (88)

That was written in 1894, had he been alive six years later he might have added the incidents in Bethesda to his list. The wilder patterns of the rural irreligious past could still break through when crises summoned them, especially perhaps if those patterns were not so remote as might be expected. Lord Penrhyn had had experience with anonymous letters before, "Wales", he told the Land Commissioners in 1893 "is a land where the people are particularly addicted to sending anonymous letters". (89) Neither was he, nor the community, unaware of the uses of subversive direct action for "Lord Penrhyn admitted that considerable difficulty had arisen in his district owing to the fact that the pasturage of the tenants had been enclosed". (90) The difficulty arose when fences erected were torn down by "persons... influenced by dislike of law and order". (91) Rural unrest had been breaking out regularly in Wales since the 1860s and its nature must have been alive to the quarrymen who identified and sympathised with such activity, and its uses were not lost to them.

This behaviour, however, was not just copied, it was part of the quarryman's own reflexes. In the situation of November 1900 the ethic of respectability and trade unionism was insufficient to meet the crisis. Faced with the growing threat to their way of life, a threat which had already secured its chains on them the men reacted with a different ethic: the Herald Cymraeg's reporter noted that,

" it is now argued by many that the time of patience and moderation and singing hymns in public meetings has proved incapable of bettering the situation of those who feel that they are being oppressed".(92)

The rusty ritualisation of their use of terror was of their own past.

But the ethic was for crisis only and for the rest of the dispute it had to jostle with the immediate culture of Welsh nonconformity and the disturbing new concepts of class.

The concept of popular justice and control continued throughout as, having made their rebellious stand, the quarrymen sought to defend themselves both from the assaults of the police, the courts and other repressive institutions and more important from the breakdown of their own discipline and singleness of purpose. In carrying out both functions they found themselves clashing with 'legality'.

Though they were in an otherwise disadvantageous situation, facing as they were an enemy who had abundant resources other than his quarry, the quarrymen had one strong bargaining point - their own skill. As we have seen earlier, quarrying was an occupation which demanded more than an acquired skill, it needed a work force experienced from childhood with the particular nature of the rock in the quarry. Imported blacklegs, therefore, would not be of much use though they could of course, do a limited amount of work. Even the bringing of an experienced quarryman from outside would not make up for the loss of the indigenous Penrhyn workman. The only way the Quarry could begin to work properly

again was if a section of the strikers themselves went back to work. The threat to the success of the struggle came not from scabs from without, but from within the body of workmen itself.

In the earlier months of the strike this was a source of strength and of comfort, betrayal was not then thought possible. Rumours of blacklegs arriving to take their jobs were discounted, "for you must get quarrymen, strangers cannot work in the quarry". (93) Even when the quarry had been re-opened the men were confident because "only between 35 and 40 practical, skilled quarrymen are in the quarry". (94) In this dispute therefore more than in most others internal control was of paramount importance. Solidity had to be maintained for the only danger lay within.

The methods the community employed to impose its decision onto all its members were diverse, drawing on all the sanctions they knew. The main techniques were boycott, picketing, processions and demonstrations, forms of rough music, riot and a selective use of violence including attacks on individuals and property. Other pressures, religious, educational and psychological attempted to totally exclude the blacklegs from the life of the community. Not only were these forms of social control acted out but their rationale was clearly articulated.

In the earlier stages of the dispute action was only necessary at the outset, to solidify the men in the first confusing weeks. Thus there were two mass processions to Bangor to show solidarity with the arrested twenty-six. These were huge affairs in which almost the whole community marched the five miles to the court. (95)

Bethesda's British and National schools were seriously affected as children took the day off, Bethesda Cenfacs British School was closed on November 13th 1900

" the teachers being anxious to go down to Bangor because of the trial of the quarrymen". (96) These demonstrations must have united the whole community in their determination to stay solid. Little else seems to have happened until June and only two mass meetings were held in the first eight months.

The crisis came in June as rumours that Penrhyn was to open the quarry intensified.

" During March and April clergymen, curates and officials went about the neighbourhood to try to persuade timid people to allow them to send in their names to Mr. Young as prepared to resume work on his terms, and pressure and threats were brought to bear on some... it was mentioned that 1,500 and sometimes 1,300 and 1,100 and at other times 1,800 of old workmen had sent in their names to Mr. Young at the Port Office". (97)

In these suspicious months there were signs that the community was losing its solidity there was secret grumbling among the ranks. (98) There had been an earlier rumour that the quarry was to open in the third week of January, women had reacted then by filling their aprons with stones and stationing themselves, " ready as an army at the top of the road, waiting for any fly to appear". (99) Women and children were again prominent in early June when the rumours were at last confirmed and the stewards went back to the quarry, on their way they were hooted by a noisy crowd, some making rude noises by blowing through sea-shells. Though seven people were

arrested for obstruction and for making threatening remarks, it seems that,

" there was nothing in the behaviour of the crowd which could be called threatening or anything to call for such a large number of policemen". (100)

The picketing and hooting of the stewards was warning to those workmen who were thinking of returning. On June 11th the Quarry re-opened for all classes of workmen, the chapels the previous evening counselled peace and, apart from a few scuffles, peace prevailed. (101) No-one was sure how many had gone back, it was thought the number was 400 of whom 100 were skilled quarrymen. (102) However much of a minority this may have been, it was a serious breach which called for urgent sanctions. Boycott was the most obvious weapon. D.R. Daniel urged the men not to talk to the blacklegs, to turn their faces away when they came near, to boycott the shops where they bought food. To be sure of identification, so that maximum pressure could be brought to bear, cards were issued to all strikers, homes bearing the slogan "Nid oes bradwr yn y ty hwn", (There is no traitor in this house). Most of those cards were to hang in Bethesda windows for over two years, when one came down betrayal was easily identified. Houses were to wear the badge of defiance or of submission. To make identification even easier the radical Welsh papers Y Werin and Yr Eco Cymraeg published lists of blacklegs with their addresses. (103)

The boycott worked in many ways: barbers refused to shave 'traitors'; those who had cows could not sell their milk, those who weighed pigs could find no pigs to weigh, shopkeepers refused to serve them fearing a removal of custom by those still out, finally and

significantly blacklegs found it difficult to get served with beer in some of Bethesda's pubs. (104)

The last point is interesting as the pub-chapel line was a strong line of social differentiation in temperance Nonconformist Welsh villages. It seems to have been broken by both sides during the lock-out, for though there is evidence to show that the blacklegs were more prone to alcohol than the strikers, there is also evidence that alcohol was consumed by some of the strikers who made the Bethesda pubs their own and drove the blacklegs to drink at home or in Bangor. (105) Further pressure was exerted in the chapels as those returning to work withdrew from the embarrassing intimacy of the chapel meetings and were excluded from the social communion that accompanied them. Some seem to have foreseen this difficulty and left chapel for church even before they went back to work. (106) Others were driven out

" it was made so hot for some members of chapels, after they had gone back to work, that some of them had been driven into the church". (107)

One blackleg was hooted out of his chapel. (108) Some managed to accommodate themselves by forming separate groups within the chapels, a separate class for the children of those working was established by their parents at a Wesleyan Sunday School for example. (109) Others remained in the fold but attended very irregularly. (110)

By December 1902, however, "It is almost the rule... whoever goes to the quarry goes to Church". (111)

Going back to the quarry meant expulsion from the community, even the community at its most Christian. The crime of those who returned was clear, they had broken

the collective decision of the group. W.H.Williams posed the position in June 1901:

" they had agreed to be united, and none of them, individually, had the right to settle how things were to be between him and his master. 'This was the kernel of the argument". (112)

But it was not until August 1902, by which time more men had slipped back, that the case was fully argued. The theory was that

" any man who takes part in a discussion commits a crime against one of society's basic elements if he, in the end, does not give in to the majority".

Not to do so was considered

" one of the most disgraceful sins.... trampling underfoot society's most important elements... let every man remember that after having stated his case he is bound to stand with the decision of the community . (113)

The community was imposing an extra-legal law, a law which was not written in any statute book but was no less real for that, as a speaker at the first mass meeting after the June 11th re-opening proclaimed:

"The men that returned to their work had broken a law, and the Bangor magistrates should know that". (114)

The law was a moral law and necessarily clashed with the law of the land; a quarryman, Richard Wynne Pritchard, exclaimed in January 1903,

" there are many things which are bad in the face of the law of the land and which are good in the face of the moral law". (115)

This sentiment (as we shall see later) was bolstered by

the religious conviction and rhetoric of the men.

The main punishment for breaking the law was expulsion from the community; those who rejected the decisions of the society rejected their right to membership of that society. Expulsion as we have seen, meant expulsion from all the institutions of the community, chapels, pubs, shops, those back at work were absent even from the 1902 annual meeting of the local Oddfellows Lodge. (116) Even the blacklegs' children could find themselves excluded for

"The strikers' children go mostly to the British school, and the others to the National school, generally speaking". (117)

Where the two groups did attend the same school there were a few cases of children being persecuted; one child was allowed to leave half an hour earlier than the rest for fear of being molested on the way home. (118) But some parents "apprehend danger ere it comes, and remove their children" to the Church schools. (119) On the whole, however, with repeated warnings from their headmaster "the children of strikers and secessionists fraternize together". (120)

Those who betrayed the community by going back to work were denied not only their citizenship but also their humanity. By accepting Penrhyn's 20 pieces of silver (121) they lost their manhood,

"There was not enough wealth in the whole quarry to re-pay to them that which they had lost, for they had sold their own selves". (122)

The traitors were not often called "blacklegs", the common name for them was "cynffonnau", the literal Welsh translation is "flatterers" but it also means "tails"; with this term

they were mercilessly lashed. Those with tails were animals, not fit for human consideration. A quarryman explained in August 1901 that those at work were

"Creatures of a man's shape with tails, yet they were not men. If Professor Darwin were living in Bethesda now he would not have to go far to find something to prove his point that man is descended from the ape." (123)

or as a striker song of May 1903 put it

"It's useless talking about persons

For our subject is cynffonau". (124)

This definition broke through any Christian belief one might have expected to find. A Mr. Thomas Robert became as far as I can see, the only man to be shouted down at one of the strikers' weekly meetings, his offence was to suggest that the men should "love their enemies" that is, that they should adopt a Christian attitude toward the cynffonau. (125) The popular sentiment, expressed in a quarryman's letter to the press was that

"no man who betrays his fellow workers can belong at all to Christ's religion". (126)

This belief was made easier, perhaps, by the predominantly Calvinist faith of the men, the enemies of the elect are the enemies also of God: a poem written by a quarryman ended,

"Who but a devil in man's flesh would ever wish
To live to be a traitor

And be to the world a figure of contempt

And earn the wrath of his creator". (127)

Nonconformity therefore was recruited into the community's extra-legal means of control, but more traditional tactics were also employed. After June 1901 a constant

harrassment of strike-breakers began, mostly it was not violent and consisted only of the making of animal noises by hooting crowds following the cynffonnau home.

Sometimes the tension of these situations gave rise to spontaneous fights, other times the violence was more pre-meditated. Sometimes the community acted together, at other times in small groups.

The day after the re-opening of the quarry there was a large demonstration in which 3,000 people took part, it ended with 20 summoned for threatening behaviour.(128) Demonstrations and processions, marching round the town became regular features during 1901.. Some 1,500 took part in another one on the Saturday ending in a mass meeting. Mass meetings of the strikers also became a weekly feature of the dispute, right until the end. (129) The processions and the meetings were instruments for solidifying those taking part, the marches were also a means of pressurizing those tempted to return to the quarry into staying their ground. Outside blackleg homes the processions stopped for hooting and hissing and sometimes to smash the window. Women were prominent in these activities, women for example accounted for a third of the procession on Saturday 30th June, marching together in the rear they carried their own banner..(130) This emphasised the social nature of the struggle, it was not just an industrial matter, it was of the whole community.

The summer months of 1901 were eventful ones: early in July a crowd of some 200 attacked the police as they were arresting two men, (131) there were regular arrests for obstruction and insulting language.(132) At the end of the month the pubs were closed early on

Saturday nights to prevent violence. (133)

Early in August some 300 of those working away returned home, (134) fighting broke out as police escorted the cynffonnau from work and a policeman was injured by a rock: the authorities retaliated massively sending 200 infantry and 60 cavalry into Bangor and moving 100 South Staffs. and Est Yorks. Infantry, accompanied by 30 dragoons into Lethesda. The atmosphere was tense for the Saturday night mass meeting, troops stood by and the magistrates were ready with the Riot Act. But the crowd of 4,000 filed quietly into the Market Hall to listen to their leaders and the guest speaker Keir Hardie. There were some minor scuffles during the week and a few arrests were made, but there was no major trouble.

Minor incidents continued throughout August: on the 20th some 50 cavalry had moved in when strikers attacked a pub where two blacklegs were drinking, some stone throwing and window breaking followed. (135) At the end of the month 26 people came before the magistrates charged with disturbing the peace and obstruction, (136) the next week two were charged with assault. (137) October continued in the same vein: a glimpse of the conditions prevalent can be caught from the daily list of their persecutions compiled by the cynffonnau for Penrhyn; (138) I have seen only the reports for two days, October 14th (139) and 15th, (140) but they show well the constant harassment suffered by those working. On the 14th October a W.R. Hughes of Llwybrmain complained of a stone thrown at him and of men walking around his home late at night; R. Hughes and H.H. Thomas also complained of

personal attacks and there were reports of crowds booing blackleg homes late on Saturday night.

On the 15th there were reports of considerable shouting in Llandegai. A John W. Roberts who lived some way from Bethesda complained of damage to his property. A new recruit to the quarry was especially harrassed; walking home he had been met by a crowd which threw stones at him and his police escort and called him a traitor and a murderer, during the day his wife had been pestered by children who had thrown stones and a dead rat into the house. From Henbarc a workman complained of stones being thrown at his house while Evan Evans from Coed y Parc complained that a Samuel Jones " who looked very threatening " had scared his wife. From Bryntirion came the report that "booing and shouting took place last evening as usual".

In the last week of October four men were imprisoned for assault, two for two weeks, two for a month. (141) The next weekly meeting expressed its solidarity with them and when they were released from prison a huge procession went to greet them, " all Bethesda apparently went to the station to expect them home". (142) On the whole the pressure was not violent, shouting and hooting and noises at night were what most blacklegs had to suffer. Where violence did take place it was often against property rather than persons; window-breaking became a regular feature of Bethesda life. Where those attacked actually had farms the traditional methods of rural revenge and sanction came into play: gates were broken down resulting in animals straying, (143) more serious there was at least one case of rick-burning, the victim being the under-manager of the quarry. (144)

Toward the end of December a hundred men arrived home from the South; there were a few incidents on Christmas Day (145) but the major outburst came on New Year's Eve. (146) It was to be Bethesda's most violent week. Though denied violently a semblance of planning might have been involved in the near-riot of New Year's Eve, more probably it grew spontaneously from the traditional gathering to greet the New Year. The (very sympathetic) correspondent of the Herald Cymraeg /y thought he recognised a plan, for at the stroke of midnight,

" a secret sign was given to many and they started throwing stones in all directions... The disturbances arose in a second and windows in all directions were smashed. The police could not prevent it at all. The people flowed here and there, led in different sections to different places". (147)

The crowd broke up into several groups, uncontrollable in that way by the police, and went straight for their targets; despite the stones thrown " in all directions", the crowds were very discriminating. As they rampaged through the streets blackleg windows were smashed, one group broke all the windows in the Conservative Club, others attacked the Waterloo Inn and the Victoria Hotel, the lairs of pro-penrhynites, and finally the crowd attacked the home of the unfortunate Richard Hughes, the first attack on whom had started the whole dispute; his windows were smashed and boulders crashed through his door. The following day the South Staffs. Infantry and the 7th Hussars were brought into the district. On Thursday there was what seems to have been a serious attack on the cynffionnau as they were returning from

work at 5.p.m. with their police escort, many were forced to flee across the river into the woods. During further incidents in the town two blacklegs were severely beaten and the police drew their truncheons; they were forced to seal off the blackleg streets to prevent attacks on them. At 10 p.m. the cavalry arrived and a large crowd gathered outside the police station. They were pacified by their leaders, however, and after being led by William Jones M.P. in the singing of Hen Wlad fy Nhadau, the Welsh National Anthem, they dispersed.

On Saturday afternoon 100 police and 150 soldiers escorted a hooting procession of some 600 around the town but there was no trouble. In the mass meeting that followed the men's leaders and the local preachers pleaded for an end to violence. Breaking windows, as the Rev. T.Griffiths of Bethania pointed out, is not respectable. Only D.R.Daniel was equivocal in his judgement, he did not approve of the violence but it was the fashion of the times, it was what Chamberlain and Balfour believed in,

" don't follow the fashion too far but let freedom and justice continue to burn in your hearts until victory".

The other speakers protested that Chamberlain's example should never be followed.

Twenty-seven people appeared before Bangor magistrates following the disturbances, they were charged variously with stone-throwing, an offence under a bye-law, disturbing the peace, using threatening language and riotous behaviour. (148) As a reward, perhaps, for their efforts they won two converts from among the blacklegs, (149) but the rest continued at work.

Incidents continued through 1902 but at a lower level than previously, certainly fewer incidents were reported in the press. In February there was a dangerous moment when strikers hooting outside a blackleg home were fired on with a revolver, on March 18th the Herald Cymraeg reported that the breaking of windows was continuing apace. By the end of March the cost of maintaining constant police patrols was beginning to tell and the Caernarfonshire Police Committee applied to make Bethesda a special police area, paying for its own police protection, an idea hotly opposed by Bethesda's ratepayers; (150) the Home Office also disapproved of such a change. (151)

The only major incidents took place when men returned home from South Wales: there was some fighting over Easter following the return of one hundred to two hundred men; (152) in early September trouble flared up again. This time it started at the Eisteddfod in Bangor when groups of men home for the event clashed with blacklegs. (153) The fighting continued sporadically on Saturday night when 80 police tried to control the situation; a serious attempt by some 60 young men was also made to prevent some of the blacklegs going into the quarry after the weekend, but it failed when mounted police intervened.

For the last year of the struggle incidents of the kind common in 1901-02 became fewer and more isolated. There was some hooting in August 1903 and the last procession was in September when a crowd of 100 greeted W.J. Parry returning from his trial in London, and dragged his carriage through the town.

How serious were these disturbances and incidents? Inevitably it is very difficult to judge as the one side minimized their importance, the other maximized them. Certainly compared to disturbances during some other industrial disputes they were not too serious, there was never any sustained fighting with police or military. During the 1896 - 97 dispute John Burns had pointed out that

"if Lord Penrhyn's quarries had been in the Rhondda Valley.. it is possible that his castle might have been pulled down about his ears... these men have been too conciliatory and peaceable, and have been singing hymns instead of learning how to box". (154)

This judgement, however true of '96 - 97 was not quite true of 1901 - 2. In the period from June 3rd 1901 to December 24th, 1902, 852 incidents were reported to the Chief Constable by those working in the quarry. (155) This figure is undoubtedly inflated and includes many non-criminal incidents but as we have seen much trouble did take place. From September 30th 1901 to December 4th 1902 the county paid £4, 418. 8. 11d. for peace-keeping in Bethesda, (156) and in that same period there were 125 prosecutions. (157) Lest these figures be taken as conclusive one should hasten to point out that the expense of law and order was considered "most exorbitant" (158) and the number of police used was far more than necessary. Moreover, of the 125 prosecutions 39 were discharged, 13 withdrawn, 2 absconded and only 71 convicted or committed for trial: a conviction rate of about 57½ per cent which was "considerably under the normal ratio". (159)

But even with these significant qualifications

it is plain that something other than hymn singing was going on in Bethesda at this time. The reason why the commotion was always contained was because it was meant to be so. The violence of the community was a judiciously used instrument, only one of a range of pressures and control available. Hooting and shouting and making threatening noises in the night is not 'violence' but rather expressions of a traditional extra-legal non-violent means of social control. Very often violence flared when those carrying out these practices were provoked by blacklegs or police; in yet another incident concerning the contractor, Richard Hughes, even the Chief Constable A.A. Ruck argued that Hughes "behaved towards the crowd in an aggravating manner". (160) Indeed there is plenty of evidence to show that the cynffonnau were easily moved to violence. (161)

The activities of the community, though widespread and, at least for a year, daily in their persistence, were contained to fit into a certain pattern of control; as W.H. Williams told the Standing Joint Police Committee

"If there were any intention on the part of the men to injure people they could blow them into atoms in spite of the police". (162)

Or, as John Williams tried to explain,

"If there were 100 policemen, - the windows would have been broken just the same... It is something else and not the police, that induces people to keep the peace." (163)

In disciplining its own members the community was acting within recognised bounds.

(b) Law and Order.

While the 'moral law' of the community was thus

being enforced the law of the land was meeting with some difficulty. In this 1902 report the Chief Constable of the County of Caernarfon, A.A.Ruck noted that,

" a great strain has been laid upon this force for many months past, owing to a dispute between the owner of the slate quarries at Bethesda and quarrymen, and it has been a very, anxious time for the chief constable." (164)

The problem lay in the inadequacy of the local police force to deal with any major incidents, or to maintain a sustained presence. Faced with the events in Bethesda Ruck concentrated as many of his men there as he possibly could; replying to a request for a policeman to attend to a call elsewhere in the county in June 1901 Ruck was

" sor-ry to say that so many of our men are on duty at Bethesda now that it is almost impossible to find a constable at present for any extra duty". (165)

During the summer of 1901 the number of police kept in the Bethesda district varied between 25 and 50 per cent of the whole county force, an extra expense of £1,300..(166)

Before the dispute broke Bethesda was a peaceable town policed by only one sergeant and four men but during the dispute there was a continuous presence of 20 to 30 policemen in the district. (167) The force was temporarily increased, with the sanction of the Home Office, by 20 men during the turbulent Christmas period of 1901 though they were discharged at the end of May. (168)

Ruck had to rely on outside police assistance at all times of stress; in August 1901 he wrote to the Head Constable of Liverpool asking for re-inforcements

" as many as possible should be able to speak Welsh as I believe there are a considerable number of Welsh-speaking constables in the Liverpool force".(169)

And in January 1902 he borrowed 50 police from four neighbouring counties. (170) During 1902 police were borrowed, in the following numbers, from :

Derbyshire - 1 Inspector, 19 men;

Shropshire - 1 Superintendent, 4 Sergeants, 36 men;

Lancashire - 1 Sargent, 8 men;

Anglesey - 4 Constables;

Stockport - 1 Sargent and 10 Constables; a total of two high ranking officers, six sargents and seventy-seven constables. (171)

Despite the concentration of the county force in Bethesda and the availability of extra men from other forces the police at times felt unable to cope with the situation. In June 1901, in a letter to the army's Chester-based Chief Staff Officer for the North Western District, Ruck had foreseen a situation arising in Bethesda which, if the strikers were to mount a determined attack on those at work,

" would in all probability lead to a disturbance with which the Police alone would be unable to cope". (172)

The possibility of drafting troops into Bethesda was discussed throughout the eventful months of June and July, Ruck having been authorised by the Standing Joint Police Committee on May 31st

" to inform the officer commanding the Troops in the District that military aid might be required shortly and asking him to hold troops in readiness". (173)

The Chairman of the Standing Joint Committee, magistrate Henry Kershaw, was authorised to sign the requisition for troops, when such a requisition was deemed necessary. (174)

By July 18th it was thought that the troops should no longer be held in readiness but, the mood changed rapidly. (175) By the last week of the month Ruck felt that he had definite information as to the return of a large body of men from South Wales. (176) On July 30th he telegraphed Chester calling for troops "at once as arranged", later in the day the official requisition requiring Chester to "send troops to Bangor, North Wales in aid of the Civil Power" was dispatched with Henry Kershaw's signature. (177)

The next day Ruck wrote to the Home Office justifying the decision to bring in troops with the vague claim that the police were no longer able to cope as some policemen had had to be returned to neighbouring forces. (178)

The troops did little while in the area and it is doubtful whether their presence did anything other than further embitter the feelings of the strikers; the infantry were removed within a week (179) though the cavalry were to remain until the end of the month.

When troops were next requisitioned, on January 1st 1902, there was somewhat more justification though, once again, their value to the authorities were minimal. Ruck had reported to the Home Office in mid-December that "mischief" was likely when men returned to the area for Christmas though he had no definite information as to this; all available men, about 40 constables in all, were to be sent to Bethesda for the holiday; troops, he felt, were not needed. (180)

The near riot of New Year's Eve, however, when 26 houses were attacked, (181) caught the police off guard. They were unable to do anything to prevent the disturbances and they were also,

" owing to its being a very dark night... unable to identify any of the persons who were taking an active part in the disorder". (182)

After surveying the night's damage on the following morning, Ruck telegraphed Chester requiring them to hold 100 infantry and a troop of cavalry in readiness pending a decision by the magistrates. (183) By 6 p.m. the magistrates had met and authorised the requisition, (184) the infantry arrived in Bethesda at 4.a.m. the next day, the cavalry arrived in the evening. (185) They do not appear to have been present, however, when a column of those going to work and their police escort were attacked and scattered on the 2nd . The strikers then

"made a rush, which the police were unable to stop, for the workmen, who had to escape as best they could". (186)

The cavalry were used over the next few days to escort men along with police and a magistrate, to and from the quarry, (187) but when two special trains took the strikers away again on January 6th the area soon became much quieter (188) and the infantry were withdrawn on the ninth. (189) The cavalry, however, remained, stationed at Bangor and Bethesda, as the area continued tense with a lot of windows and other property being smashed. (190) They did not leave until January 28th.

Throughout the years of the dispute A.A.Ruck was bombarded with requests, and demands, for increased protection and increased action against the strikers, from Lord Penrhyn, E.A.Young, and from those who had gone back to work. (191) Before the re-opening of the Quarry on June 11th, 1901, he had given a personal

assurance to two of those due to return that

"protection will be afforded to you and the other workmen intending to return to work at the Penrhyn Quarries for as long as it appears to be called for". (192)

But the actions he and his men took were never considered adequate and the pressure upon him to step up anti-striker activities was constant throughout the dispute.

"I may say", he wrote to the Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office, on July 1st 1901,

"that hardly a day passes without my receiving complaints from the manager of the quarry as to the hostility shown by the people and the inadequacy of the Police protection in some place or another". (193)

The note of exasperation with the quarry management's complaints was to be clearly heard in a letter to H.P.Meares, an under manager at the quarry, in December 1901:

"I am doing all that appears to one to be practicable and required by the exigencies of the moment"

he wrote,

"If this appears to you to be insufficient I can only suggest that you should address yourself to the County Magistrates". (194)

Three weeks later he was having to make the same point to Lord Penrhyn himself in response to a letter complaining about the degree of protection extended to those at work. (195)

His disagreements with the quarry-owner and management were over two issues: the definition of what

was actually 'illegal' behaviour and the quarry management's refusal to admit that those at work should modify their behaviour for the sake of peace.

The first was a point which Ruck found considerable difficulty in getting the quarry management to recognise.. They wanted immediate action against all those who embarrassed or insulted those at work. Lord Penrhyn wrote to him on June 26th 1901 demanding action against the Saturday evening demonstrations in Bethesda. Ruck replied that,

" my duty as a Police Officer, as I understand it, is to consider whether they amount to what is known as an 'unlawful assembly'"

For the moment he did not think that they did though,

" whether they constitute 'intimidation' under the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875 is another matter. But as I have said from the first I do not think it is the duty of the Police to initiate proceedings under that act".

He also rejected Penrhyn's advice that he should 'warn' certain individuals. (196) A year later he was having to make very much the same point to Penrhyn, i.e. that while he could, and had, acted in any clear case of assault, when it came to the incidents of 'hooting' in the district there was " very little we can do about it, however annoying". (197)

The second point at issue between Ruck and the Penrhyn Quarry management was the public behaviour of those who had returned to work. By the spring of 1902 it would appear that Ruck was becoming increasingly convinced that,

" according to information I have received from

the Police, the workmen themselves, by their conduct, were responsible for a disturbance which occurred recently". (198)

He had written to Lord Penrhyn in December 1901 asking that workmen and their wives avoid provocative places, quoting the example of the wives of two blacklegs who had gone shopping in Bethesda on Saturday night and had consequently been hooted. (199) He re-iterated the point to E.A.Young in May 1902:

" I should like again to point out that nearly all the more serious disturbances are caused by the appearance in the streets of Bethesda of workmen or their families at times when large numbers of the opposite party are about". (200)

This time he quoted the example of two blacklegs who provocatively stood waving their hats and laughing outside a public house while strikers streamed to a meeting at the Market Hall.

A furious E.A.Young replied with his characteristic brand of logic, arguing that Ruck had got it all wrong in charging that "nearly" all the more serious disturbances are caused by the appearance in the streets of Bethesda of my workmen or their families"; surely the opposite was true, " for if the strikers kept away from Bethesda all would be peaceful". He was forced to admit, however, " the possibility of some of the workmen being injudicious from time to time", but, he claimed, " a great number of them are peaceful men". (201)

In general,, therefore, relations between the intransigent quarry management and the rather more sensible, if confused, Chief Constable were somewhat strained. " There is no doubt whatever ", wrote Young to his employer, " that the police protection is insufficient "

This prompted Young to encourage independent legal actions by his workmen, (203) with costs paid in many instances by the quarry, (204) and to generally use his solicitors, Carter, Vincent and Jones of Bangor, to encourage prosecutions. Thus Vincent was putting pressure on the magistrates in November 1900 to issue warrants for the arrest of twenty " of the ringleaders " rather than the summonses which the magistrates " in such a state of terror of the mob " favoured. (205) And in May 1901, following the disturbances associated with the return of officials to the quarry, Vincent was stationed at his office to " take the evidence of the constables with a view to prosecuting as many as he can get the names of ". (206)

In February 1901, when he was eager to re-open the quarry, Young went so far as to enquire from the Free Labour Protection Association whether they were in a position to supply him special constables as protection for prospective blacklegs was " not forthcoming from Ruck until there is another riot ". (207) When Millar replied with an offer of twenty such " special police " Young hesitated to accept them since " 20 men would (not) be of the slightest use " except to push Ruck " to do his duty ". (208)

But if E.A. Young and those who had gone back to work considered police action in Bethesda ineffective and insufficiently tough, the majority of the population of the district saw them as biased. and over-zealous and found their presence offensive. There were too many of them and their function was plain.

A striker's song, " Song of the Traitor " explained

" There are hordes of policemen
To be seen speckling the land
Under the patronage of the authorities
So they may defend Betrayal ". (209)

The people of Bethesda had no confidence in the police,

" they now consider that to add to the number of
policemen is nothing more than to add to the number
of Lord Penrhyn's supporters in the district ". (210)

Their complaints fell under four headings:

- (a) Want of tact on the part of the police
- (b) Acts of cruelty and improper language by the
police
- (c) False evidence by the police
- (d) Want of impartiality on the part of the police

and their evidence in support of these complaints as
presented to the Standing Joint Commissioners is convincing.

This sub-committee of the C.S.J.S. was set up to
" enquire into matters at Bethesda " and carried out its
investigations in November and December 1902 hearing
dozens of witnesses from the strikers' ranks and from
the police. The majority report, signed by five of the
seven members was severely critical of the police and
supported many of the complaints of the men. They
recommended

" that the number of police stationed at Bethesda
should be as soon as possible reduced to normal,
inasmuch as the presence of a large force of
policemen tends to irritate the people ",

that the Superintendent in charge in Bangor be removed
to another division and that " Sgt. Owen, now in charge
of the Bethesda District," severely criticized by the
strikers, having done his work well should be transferred

to another district, " as further prolonged hard work and mental strain could not fail to injuriously affect his health " . (211)

(c) Effects.

The effectiveness of all the pressure, the " unseen tyranny " (212) as Young called it, exerted by those refusing Penrhyn's terms is not readily gauged. The solidarity of the community during the first months certainly seems unbreachable, a view confirmed by the ballot of December 1900. (213) The management clearly underestimated this solidarity; Young was confident that the men would be only too glad to return to work when he re-opened the quarry on November 19th, particularly given " the over-awing presence of the military " . (214) An opinion which ^{he} was to be rudely disabused of.

By the end of January Young was again hopeful that he could " shortly restart work " . (215) and in February he was claiming that men were applying to re-start work at the rate of five or six a day. (216) Active in recruiting for him at this time was the Rev. W. Morgan of St. Anne's Church and by the end of February Young was thanking him, for his

" efforts by way of speaking quietly to some of the men is bearing fruit, for, after a cessation of applications for work several fresh ones came in yesterday and no less than ten this morning " . (217) By mid-April Penrhyn was writing to Ruck intimating that he could soon be " naming a date for the return of several hundred men to their work " . (218) May 13th was

suggested by Young as a re-starting date (219) but this was postponed by a month to June 11th, by which time all the complicated precautions necessary would have been completed: on June 6th Young was reassuring a worried prospective blackleg from Pentir that he would be able to come by train, that there would be police on the train, that there would be extra police as an escort from Pentir to Felin Hen and that some fifteen of his neighbours were also giving up the struggle and returning to work and that it would be advisable for them all to travel together. (220)

It is not clear exactly how many men returned on June 11th; Young claimed a figure of 500 and this would seem to be accurate. (221) Those who had lacked courage on June followed during the summer and by September Young was claiming that " the Quarry is now in full swing with about 650 workmen ". (222). Out of a total workforce of nearly 3,000 this was by no means the rebellion of the loyal that Young and Penrhyn had hoped for but it was, nevertheless, a serious breach in the solidarity of the quarrymen. The knife has missed the jugular but it had inflicted its wound and the bleeding, however slow, could not now be staunched.

In the following months the blood dribbled very slowly and the number who joined the original blacklegs was minimal. At the end of November Young was complaining about a press report " put in with no friendly intent", which had suggested a mass return to work on the previous Monday; in the event only one new man came in on that date. (223) Young estimated that during the previous quarry month six slate makers and a dozen labourers had returned. (224)

There is no evidence to suggest that the rate of the

return was to increase at all significantly during the remaining months of 1901 nor throughout the whole of 1902. It was not until Spring 1903 that the flow quickened appreciably: thirty three men, of whom nineteen were slate-makers, were taken on during the quarry month ending on May 12th. (225) The following week nine men came in. (226) But this was still far from a flood; that did not take place until the Autumn of 1903 when all was lost and could clearly be seen to have been lost. One hundred and one men re-started in October and in the first week of November applications were being received at the rate of ten a day. (227) On November 3rd, a few days before the three year struggle was formally abandoned, Young reported that " 5 more started work this morning, making an addition of 25 for the first week of this Quarry month ". (228) There were 1,565 at work seven weeks later on December 30th, (229) which, given an estimated 500 returned to work during the late Autumn would suggest that as late as the end of September 1903 there were not many more than 1,000 at work in the quarry, considerably less than half the original work-force. (230)

Many of these men, moreover, were 'new' men who had not been amongst those who had walked out in November 1900,.

It is not clear how many 'new' men entered Lord Penrhyn's employ during the dispute; he himself stated in January 1903 that " since work was resumed at the Quarry in June 1901 a number of new hands besides nearly 100 boys have been taken on " (231) and Young refers several times to " the newcomers " or " the new men " (232) in the quarry. Some came from a distance, others came from the locality and of this group several were

ex-employees i.e. men who had in the past worked in Penrhyn but had not been at work in November 1900.

A group of Italians, working at the time in a lead mine near Aberystwyth offered their services in March 1902, (233); several men came from Penmachno in September 1902 (234); others came straight out of the army, one from service in the Boer War (235), the churchwarden of Dolwyddelan parish was employed in July 1903.(236)

A good number of the local men taken on who had not been in the quarry in 1900, had either failed to get work in the quarry previously (237) or had been dismissed from their employment there, usually for drinking; some of these were re-employed (238) while others were considered incorrigible and were refused;(239) of those who were re-employed a few soon found themselves in trouble again. (240)

In a sentence of a letter to the Liverpool Daily Post which he was to later delete Young admitted that

" the number of labourers employed each month varies and those found unfit for the work are gradually weeded out ". (241)

For it is clear from his correspondence files that a goodly proportion of those who found employment after June 11th were men who would not have been employed in normal times, some of them being so unfit that they had to be dismissed. Given the one hundred boys and this number of 'new' men employed at the quarry, their exact percentage cannot be assessed but the evidence suggests that they were not an insubstantial section, then the number of quarrymen originally employed in the quarry in 1900 and returning to work before the autumn of 1903 would appear to be definitely fewer than the 1,000 estimated earlier.

To that extent, therefore, the community's solidarity and the pressures brought to bear to maintain it, were remarkably effective. The management, of course, were in no doubt that the hooting, the demonstrating, the boycotting were keeping men away from the quarry and the consequent icy exclusion; that was why they maintained such constant pressure on the Chief Constable to take action against all sorts of 'harrasment'. "More men would have applied for work", local manager D.D.Davies told Young in July 1902, " had not the strikers been so succesful with their intimidation". (242) A few months earlier Young himself had fulminated about those who applied for work, received a 'ticket', and then failed to turn up because " their fear of working..... drives them to South Wales instead of into temporary lodgings on the Tregarth site until things become quieter". (243)

Another worry for the management was to ensure that the new recruits were properly skilled men. Evidence is hard to come by here but some of it at least would suggest that labourers were somewhat easier to recruit than skilled quarrymen. There is little to suggest that many skilled men came from other quarrying districts for there was a general feeling throughout the quarrying area that men should not seek work in Penrhyn and " take another man's living ". (244) What is certainly true is that the men were quite convinced that the real threat to them came not from a mixed, unskilled workforce of men previously sacked or recently left the army, however many of them there were, the danger to their cause increased significantly only when a skilled slate-maker or rockman, " quarrymen ", returned

to labour productively. Thus it was reported in December 1901 that,

" we have had (no) case of persecution in any shape or form against new men taken on. It is against the old hands returning to work that the chief attack is made." (245)

The men may have overestimated somewhat the importance of skill in the new production schemes being operated in the quarry (246) but there is still no doubt that what Young wanted was " respectable, qualified quarrymen " (247) and that all the men's efforts were designed to prevent him getting many. (248)

Perhaps nothing speaks so eloquently of the power of solidarity in Bethesda as the geographical basis of blacklegging. The men who returned came, overwhelmingly, from the villages of Tregarth and Sling (249), or were forced to move there or to Bangor when they took their card down in a street in Bethesda itself or in the villages of Caerllwynngrydd, Gerlan, Mynydd Llandegai, . Tregarth was considered the " nesting place of cynffonwiddiaeth " (250) (blacklegger) and there is evidence to support this accusation: on a list of 13 men who returned to work on June 11th, seven of those named had addresses in Tregarth, while only two came from Bethesda; (251) of the 16 men working in Shed J eleven were from Tregarth, only four from Bethesda. (252) Others who chose to go back to work found that life was impossible in the streets of Bethesda and chose rather to leave the town and move to Bangor; (253) Bethesda itself remained virtually solid until the end.

The relatively low number of men to return was not

purely the result of solidarity, however, for a considerable number applied for work only to receive a curt note from the manager informing them that he had " no need for their services at present ". (254) For the management had no intention of allowing back to work anyone who had been involved in the disturbances or in the N.W.Q.U, they wanted only 'loyal' men. Penrhyn made his position clear in a private letter in January, 1903,

" I do not wish to have men in my employment who have no confidence in myself or in the officials who are appointed by me and nothing is further from my intentions than to again invite the leaders of mischief to re-enter my service ";

the intake of ' new ' men and boys and,

" the additional fact that there were far too many men engaged in the quarry previous to the strike will necessitate the exclusion of some hundreds of the former employees who severed their connection with my Quarry over two years ago ". (255)

The message is unmistakeable; this was to be no victimization of 'ringleaders', not the sacking of the seventy-one as in 1896. Penrhyn's project was to completely re-fashion his workforce, to cut out all those who recognized some authority other than his own.

" I believe that a large number of men will remain out for years to come ", wrote Young in May 1902, .." we have maintained the right to manage the quarry without the dictation of the trades union interference ". (256)

In order to realize this ambitious project a structure of information gathering had to be constructed, which would allow every man applying for work to be vetted. Those failing had their names registered on

what the management variously called " the Black list" (257) and " the excluded list ". (258) The assiduous keeper of this list and the man in charge of collecting information on the people of Bethesda was D.D.Davies, appointed local manager in March 1902. He reported to Young on every applicant for work and on every applicant for a tenancy or pension. His reports classified men with a gauge running from " very loyal ", through " loyal " to " passively disloyal " and " actively disloyal ". His reports of which there were scores, were sometimes lengthy and often written with a wry sharpness. (259)

The information was gathered from those at work, from officials in the quarry and from a paid informant. Spying was in the air in Bethesda, another of the meanings of 'cynffonwr' is tale-teller. Gossip, stories, slander, petty quarrels as well as hard information must have poured into D.D.Davies' compendious files. Telling tales, it was claimed by the strikers, was a sure way of ingratiating oneself with the managers of the Penrhyn quarries.

The business was rather more serious than the mere collection of personal details, unsavoury enough as that might be, for there was always a fear and a suspicion that confidential decisions were reaching the ears of Young and Penrhyn. (260) When Penrhyn required the minutes of the Quarry Committee up to 1885 for his libel case against W.J.Parry they seem to have found their way to him easily enough. In May 1902 there is reference in a letter from the solicitor Vincent to a copy of the Quarry Committee minutes given by a Mr. John Evans; these were probably pre-1885 minutes though they could, of course, have been from a later period. (261)

Leaks were always possible , and not always from obvious sources: a John Jones of Tregarth, for example, an official who had quarelled with the Penrhyn management in 1900 wrote in November to the manager of the nearby Dinorwic Quarry, W.W.Vivian informing him that, though himself a non-unionist who had not joined in any disturbances he was,

" in a position to be able to attend their secret Cabinet and get to know all if desired". (262)

One cannot be sure how much credence to give to this claim; Jones, an intelligent enough commentator on Penrhyn, was desperately trying to get himself appointed in Dinorwic, but if information had flowed from him, or from others in positions similar to his, then it would undoubtedly have finally found its way to Young.

Young certainly received regular reports from the men's mass meetings and though these were usually reported in the local press it obviously helped to have his own man, who was presumably not known as a Penrhyn man, present.. Thus in late October 1903, when there were rumours of a major clash amongst the strikers Young informed Penrhyn that he was, " therefore, sending a special reporter and if there is any special news I will advise you tonight ". (263)

The final component of this structure was a paid informant, a Mr. T. Ellis. Ellis appears to have been taken on as early as 1898 when Young refers to him as " my new detective ". (264) It is not clear what exactly his duties were though he may well have been the "T" who prepared a report on Glasinfryn men for Davies. (265) Under the heading " Quarry Riots 1900 " he was given almost £40 between November 1900 and January 1901 (266)

and in November, 1903. the strike over he was, under the heading Quarry Sundries (strike), given £10 " as a present to pay expenses of removal". (267)

The purpose of all this information gathering was to prepare the 'excluded list' of those who were not to be allowed back into the quarry nor to receive any of Penrhyn's pensions or tenancies. The control of housing had seemed to have been a strong card in Young's hand; writing to Mr. Trench the manager of the Penrhyn Estate, who was in charge of tenancies, in November 1900, Young asked him, that,

" in view of the fact that many of the men are absolutely disloyal I should be glad of an opportunity of making enquiries about any would-be tenant before you give any definite permission".(268)

It is clear from the lists of men applying for houses that a definite bias existed from then on in favour of the " loyal " (269) but the system was by no means watertight and Trench regularly ignored Young's reports, probably out of a professional desire to find good tenants, a fact which drove Davies to comment angrily that,

" the men cannot understand, and really it is difficult to understand, why cannot the Estate Office give the same loyal support to the quarrymen who are fighting Lord Penrhyn's battle as well as their own, as the Port Office (where the quarry management was.MJ) is giving them ". (270)

But if the Estate Office failed to completely enter into the spirit of things the quarry management struck resolutely and ruthlessly to its " excluded list

Of the applications for work coming in at the rate of ten a day in late October 1903 Young commented that " about half are acceptable "; (271) off the fifty-three men who applied during the first week-end in November " fully half are not acceptable ". (272) On the morning of December 29 seven weeks after the dispute had ended, Young " spent over four hours going through reports on the character of a great number of applicants and accepted thirty-five ". (273)

Two months after the end of the dispute John Buckley of Glasinfryn wrote despairingly to apply for work, his previous letter in September had brought no reply; fifty-six years old he had worked for thirty-eight years for the Penrhyn family, he claimed that, " I always attend to my work and during the strike I have kept perfectly quiet and never attended any meetings ". (274) Opposite his name on the excluded list, however, was ' T ' 's five word denunciation that was to seal his fate " very bitter to those he knows ". (275)

The blacklist, the " over-awing presence of the military ", and all the power and patronage of the Penrhyn's was therefore thrown against the hooting and the boycotting. For three years the community's weaponry, and its sense of justice, proved adequate.

Of those that returned, exchanging their membership of a society for work, few and only hesitant generalisations can be made; little is known of their spokesmen. (276) They lived as a caste, paid every month but spurned and humiliated, sustained often by family ties and by the society of their own streets. They had a tendency to be Anglicans, and returning to work certainly 'converted' many to the Church of England; they had, possibly, a

tendency to drink more often than their enemies; some were from families who had long been thought of as "cynffonwyr"; a few had been active strikers in November 1900,, many must have gone back in poverty and despair. One gets the impression that, on the whole, they were men who were in any case not in the mainstream of Bethesda society, Anglicans, drifters, drinkers, independent-minded men willing to accept Penrhyn's authority, and his money, rather than the authority of the community's own deaconry. But one should hasten to add that amongst the ranks on both sides there were many exceptions to these generalisations. (277)

In March 1902 two strikers touring South Wales raising money told an audience of workmen outside Cardiff that even if a settlement were to be reached the problems raised by the dispute would not be solved for,

" the great drawback... is to find some peaceful means between both parties for the future because those who are out say that they can never look upon, nor do anything for those now working.

They will never give a helping hand in event of a sledge having derailed or something similar ". (278)

The hatred that grew up between strikers and 'cynffonwyr' was searing and absolute. In those cases where it did soften it only did so after many years, and families in Bethesda three quarters of a century later know full well from which camp they were descended. (279)

CHAPTER VIII The Penrhyn Lock-Out, 1900-03.

(1.) Y streic Fawr.

1. E.H.Phelps Brown, The Growth of British Industrial Relations (1959), p. 249.
2. GAS XNWQU / 48, Cash Book.
3. GAS XNWQU / 63, Caebraichycafn Lodge No.2.
Register of Members.
4. ibid.. These accurate figures though not
the same as those given by A.P.Thompson,
Desolate Bethesda ! (1902) and quoted by
J.Roose Williams, " The Life and Work of
William John Parry, Bethesda with particular
reference to his trade union activities
among the slate quarrymen of North Wales ".
(Bangor M.A. thesis, 1953) p. 311 confirm
the impression of rapid union growth in
Caebraichycafn after April 1900.
5. Parry. op. cit., pp. 170 - 175;
Yr Herald Cymraeg, Oct 30 - November 27.
6. Y.H.C., 2. 11. 1900.
7. See bibliography for list of pamphlets produced
by the two sides.
8. i.e. to hold meetings in the quarry.
9. Parry, op. cit., pp. 172 - 3.
10. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 9. 4. 1900.
11. ibid., 4, 11, 18, 25. 6. 1900.
12. ibid., 6. 8. 1900.
13. ibid., 7. 1. 1900.
14. See Caernarfonshire County Council and the
Penrhyn Dispute.

15. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 10. 6. 1902.
16. Ibid., 8. 7. 1902.
17. ibid., 13. 5. 1902.
18. ibid., 16. 9. 1902.
19. ibid., 23. 9. 1902; 7. 10. 1902.
20. ibid., 2. 12. 1902.
21. ibid., 23. 12. 1902.
22. See Asquith's speech in House of Commons,
Hansard Parliamentary Debates,
vol. CXXI, fourth series, pp 482 to 495.
23. Hansard, vol. CXVIII pp. 1649 - 1680.
24. For the 1896 Conciliation Act see H.A.Clegg,
Fox, Thompson, op. cit., pp. 13. - 14.
p. 263 etc.
25. Hansard, vol CXXI, p. 505.
26. See his defence of Penrhyn, Hansard, vol CXXI,
pp. 539 - 548.
27. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 14. 41 1903.
28. ibid., 25. 8. 1903; 8, 15, 22. 9. 1903.
29. ibid., 8. 9. 1903.
30. ibid., 29. 9. 1903.
31. ibid., 27. 10. 1903.
32. by 192 votes to 161, (ibid., 10. 11. 1903)
33. ibid., 1. 12. 1903.
34. ibid., 8. 12. 1903.
35. Roose Williams, op. cit., p. 276.
36. Bennetts Business Directory. (1899, 1910)
- (2) The issues.
37. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 20. 5. 1902.
38. W.J.Parry, The Penrhyn Lock-Out, p. 72.

39. ibid., p. 74.
40. The contracts varied in size from three
bargains to nearly a whole gallery. (Parry,
op. cit., p. 74.)
41. ibid.
42. ibid., p. 80.
43. ibid., p. 75.
44. ibid., p. 73.
45. Frank Price Jones, " Gwleidyddiaeth Sir
Gaernarfon yn y 19^{eg} Ganrif ", CHST vol 26
(1965) p. 98.
46. R.C. on Land, Appendix 10, this sum was for
farms and cottages only.
47. Mining Journal, 10. 9. 1859; Caernarfon and
Denbigh Herald, 29. 3. 1845.
48. His London home was Mortimer House, Halkin St, SW1,
his other property Wicken Park, Stony Stretford.
49. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 29. 9. 1896.
50. R.C. on Land, evidence of Lord Penrhyn
24,777 - 23,013. He also bemoaned the fact
that the North Wales terrain was not suitable
for fox-hunting: " I am sure that if there
were hounds in North Wales it would do a
great deal of good, it would bring farmers and
labourers together ". (23,013)
51. Penrhyn sued Parry for remarks published in
the Clarion, he was awarded £500 damages.
52. see pp. 114 - 123
53. see pp. 491 - 507
54. " In 1896, owing to strikes in the Welsh
quarries, the U.S. gained a foothold again in
England and in the English colonies " .

(T.Nelson Dale, Slate in the U.S. 1st ed.1906,
p. 137)

55. PQ 100 / 42. E.A.Young to 17. 5. 1902.
56. PQ 99/6, 7, Young to Webb, 11. 12. 1900.
57. ibid., 24. 1. 1900; 11. 12. 1900; 28. 11. 1900.
58. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 4. 12. 1900.
59. ibid., 5. 2. 1901.
60. ibid., 24. 12. 1901.
61. ibid., 4. 12. 1900.
62. ibid., 1. 1. 1901.
63. Report of Quarry Committee of Inquiry, p. 38.
64. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 20. 1. 1903.
65. The Daily News claimed that he was also a Conservative but there is no evidence for this unlikely claim.
66. Standing Joint Police Committee, Evidence of Henry Jones.
67. NWQU Minute Book, 27. 10. 1900; 4. 5. 1903.
68. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 7. 1. 1903.
69. Y Chwarelwr Cymreig, 4. 6. 1901.
70. NWQU Minute Book, 25. 7. 1903.
71. ibid., 5. 5. 1902.
72. ibid., 6. 5. 1901.
73. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 11. 12. 1900.
74. Also an Anglican. (Emyr Hywel Owen, Lleufer, (Summer 1963)).
75. W.W.Jones 1837 - 1903; he visited America in 1902 on a not very successful fund raising tour and died in August 1903 before the end of the dispute. (Obituary in Y Werin, 3. 9.1903)
76. J.Williams, Braslun of William H.Williams,Arafon.
77. Daily News, 8. 1. 1901.
78. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 20. 5. 1902.

3. Social Control.
- (a) Pressure.
79. Yr Herald Cymraeg. 30. 10. 1900.
80. ibid., 6. 11. 1900.
81. G.F.T.U., 7th Quarterly Report, March 1901.
82. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 6. 11. 1900.
83. "devils" - stronger term in Welsh than in English.
84. " Big-mouth steward " - The names of the officials objected to were not published in the press.
85. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 6. 11. 1900.
86. Parry, op. cit., pp 177 - 8.
87. cf. the " Scotch Cattle " outbreaks in the coalfield of South Wales, the intense hatred of contractors was an important factor then as it was in Bethesda.
88. ed. A.J.Ellis, Speeches and Addresses by Thomas E. Ellis, (Wrexham, 1912) " Social Life in Rural Wales " (1894) p. 134.
89. R.C. on Land, 22836.
90. J.E.Vincent, The Land Question in North Wales (Longmans, 1896) p. 258.
91. ibid., p. 259.
92. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 6. 11. 1900.
93. ibid., 1. 1. 1901.
94. N.W.Q.U. minutes. 2. 11. 1901, the secretary's underlining.
95. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 13. 11. 1900. 100 students in caps and gowns greeted the marchers in Bangor.

96. Bethesda Cenfaes British School Log Book,
13. 11. 1900.
97. Parry, op. cit., p. 174.
98. See editorial,, Yr Herald Cymraeg, 19. 4. 1901.
99. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 22. 1. 1901.
100. ibid., 4. 6. 1901.
101. ibid., 18. 6. 1901.
102. ibid.
103. Y Werin, 13. 6. 1901; Yr Eco Cymraeg, 15. 6. 1901.
104. Yr Eco Cymraeg, 22. 6. 1901.
105. Standing Joint Police Committee, Report of
Sub-committee appointed to enquire into
Matters at Bethesda, (January 1903). p. 595 and
719.
106. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 11. 6. 1901.
107. S.J.P.C. ff 721.
108. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 20. 1. 1903.
109. S.J.P.C. p. 39.
110. ibid., ff 704.
111. S.J.P.C., p. 39.
112. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 25. 6. 1901. Williams used
the same argument to defend the First World
War.
113. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 5. 8. 1902.
114. ibid., 25. 6. 1901.
115. ibid., 27. 1. 1903.
116. Yr Eco Cymraeg, 4. 1. 1902.
117. S.J.P.C. ff 765.
118. ibid., p. 42.
119. Carneddi British School, School Log Book,
2. 9. 1903.
120. ibid.

121. Which he paid as a bonus to all those going back to work on his terms. Hansard vol. CXVIII p. 1654. March 4.
122. W.H.Williams reported in Yr Herald Cymraeg, 2. 6. 1903.
123. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 6. 9. 1901.
124. N.W.Q.U., Cynhadledd Bethesda, 1. 5. 1903.
125. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 12. 5. 1903.
126. *ibid.*, 2. 7. 1901.
127. *ibid.*, 24. 6. 1902.
128. *ibid.*, 18. 6. 1901.
129. Reported widely in the local press they are the main source for the men's opinions.
130. Daily News, 2. 7. 1901.
131. Yr Eco Cymraeg, 13. 7. 1901.
132. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 23. 7. 1901.
133. *ibid.*, 30. 7. 1901.
134. *ibid.*, 6. 8. 1901.
135. *ibid.*, 20. 8. 1901.
136. *ibid.*, 3. 9. 1901.
137. *ibid.*, 10. 9. 1901.
138. Who then forwarded them to the police.
139. GAS. M/622/38.
140. GAS. M/622/39.
141. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 29. 10. 1901.
142. Bethesda, Cenfaes British School Log Book, 7. 1. 1901.
143. GAS. M/624/39.
144. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 5. 11. 1901.
145. *ibid.*, 14. 1. 1902.
146. *ibid.*, 7. 1. 1902.
147. *ibid.*

148. ibid., 14, 21. 1. 1902.
149. ibid., 28. 1. 1902.
150. ibid., 25. 3. 1902.
151. ibid., 1, 15. 4. 1902.
152. ibid., April 1. 4. 1902.
153. ibid., 16. 9. 1902.
154. John Burns, Hansard, vol. XLV, pp 735 - 6,
28. 1. 1897.
155. C.S.J.C., Report. p. 2.
156. ibid., p. 5.
157. ibid.
158. ibid., p.6..
159. ibid., p. 5.
160. GAS. M/622/30 - 32. A.A.Ruck letter to
E.A.Young.
161. e.g. see evidence of strikers to S.J.P.C.
pp 19 and 40.
162. S.J.P.C. p. 10.
163. S.J.P.C. p. 37.

(b) Law and Order.

164. Police Reports, for Year Ended September 29.1902,
County of Caernarfon.
165. GAS, Constab. Add/7. Letter Book,
A.A.Ruck to Mr. Wynn Griffith, 27. 6. 1901.
166. ibid., Report, as to special calls upon
the police, 30. 10. 1901.
167. ibid., 29. 9. 1902.
168. ibid.
169. ibid., Ruck to Head Constable, Liverpool.

170. ibid., Ruck to Home Office, 5. 1. 1902.
171. ibid., Report as to special calls, 49. 9. 1902.
172. ibid., Ruck to Chief Staff Officer, Chester,
19. 6. 1901.
173. ibid., Ruck to Under Secretary of State,
Home Office, 1. 7. 1901.
174. ibid.
175. ibid., Ruck to Chief Staff Officer, 18.7.1901.
176. ibid., Ruck to E.A.Young, 46. 7. 1901.
- He had earlier written to the police in
Mountain Ash, Glamorgan asking for information
if a lar ge body of men were going to come up
" for to drive the others out ". 19. 6. 1901.
177. ibid., telegrams to Chief Staff Officer,
30. 7. 1901.
178. ibid., Ruck to Under Secretary of State,
Home Office, 31. 7. 1901.
179. ibid., 7. 8. 1901.
180. ibid., 16. 4. 1901.
181. ibid., 1. 1. 1902.
182. ibid., Ruck to magistrates 1. 1. 1902.
183. ibid., Ruck to Chief Staff Officer.. 1. 1. 1902.
184. ibid..
185. ibid., Ruck to Home Office, 3. 1. 1902.
186. ibid.
187. ibid. 5. 1. 1902.
188. ibid., 12. 1. 1902.
189. ibid., 12. 1. 1902.
190. ibid., 41. 1. 1902.
191. ibid., 28. 1. 1902.
192. ibid., Ruck to D. Roberts, W.Williams.
8. 6. 1901.

193. ibid., Ruck to U.S.S. Home Office, 1. 6. 1901.
194. ibid., Ruck to H.P.Meares. 3. 12. 1901.
195. ibid., Ruck to Lord Penrhyn, 21. 12. 1901.
196. ibid., 27. 6. 1901; see also Penrhyn (?)
to Ruck 10. 5. 1901. CRO PQ 99/6.
197. ibid., 10. 4. 1902.
198. ibid., Ruck to Henry Jones, 13. 5. 1902.
199. ibid., Ruck to Lord Penrhyn, 21. 12. 1901.
200. ibid., Ruck to E.A.Young, 13. 5. 1902.
201. GAS PQ 99/6, 99/7, E.A.Young to A.A.Ruck,
16. 5. 1902.
202. ibid., E.A.Young to Lord Penrhyn, 21. 9. 1901.
203. Every man returning to work was sent a copy,
in Welsh, of the Conspiracy and Protection Act
1875, (PQ 100 / 85)
204. Carter Vincent certainly acted for blacklegs in
dispute. When another of " our men " was
summonsed for being involved in a disturbance
in Bangor in September 1902 it was suggested
by the management that Vincent take up his
defence along with that of another man then at
work. PQ 100/42. 18. 9. 1902. The size of
the solicitor's bills to the quarry would
suggest considerable scope to their activities:
in May 1901 they presented a bill for £450,
in April 1903 a bill for £1,467 plus a further
£ 176 and in September of the same year they
received a cheque for £700. PQ 99/6, 7.
1. 5. 1901, 20. 4. 1903, 9. 9. 1903.,
In July, 1902 the quarry paid £11. 15. 6d
expenses for men at Caernarfon re. Quarry riots.
(PQ 137/2. General Cash Book, 10. 7. 1902.)
205. PQ 100/40, 4. 11. 1900.

206. PQ. 99/ 6, 7. E.A.Young to Lord Penrhyn
31. 5. 1901.
207. ibid., Young to Millar. 1. 2. 1901.
208. ibid., 5. 2. 1901. Young was interested
in the idea, however, and enquired again of
the Free Labour Protection Association about
mounted ex-police. ibid., 8. 2. 1901.
209. Yr Eco Cymraeg, 15. 6. 1901.
210. S.J.P.C. evidence of Rev. Th. Griffiths.
211. Another historian writing on the role of the
police in the dispute quotes the Minority
Report of the S.J.P.C., signed by only two
of the seven members of the sub-committee,
as being the conclusion of the whole investigation.
He completely ignores the Majority Report.
J.Owain Jones, The History of the Caernarfonshire
Constabulary 1856 - 1950. (Caerns. Hist.Soc 1963)
Chapter vi.

(c) Effects.

212. PQ 99/6, 7. " I regret to note your threat
of social disadvantage to the minority. Is not
that unseen tyranny? " E.A.Young to
Rev. T. Isfryn Hughes, Bethesda, 9. 6. 1901.
213. When Penrhyn's terms had been rejected by
1,707 votes to 77, see p.367
214. PQ 99/6, 7. Young to Pennant, 17. 11. 1900.
215. ibid., Young to Ruck, 21. 1. 1901.
216. ibid., Young to Millar, 1. 2. 1901.
217. ibid., Young to Rev. W. Morgan 27. 2. 1901.
The men often accused the Anglican vicar of

recruiting for the quarry, this letter proves that their accusation had substance.

218. ibid., Penrhyn to Ruck, 15. 4. 1901.
219. ibid., Young to Penrhyn, 22. 4. 1901.
220. ibid., Young to J.M.Lloyd., 6. 6. 1901.
221. Each man who returned on June 11th received a gold sovereign, 650 had been withdrawn from Lord Penrhyn's current account in readiness but only 533 were paid out suggesting that that was the number to return. (PQ 13/2, General Cash Book, 11. 6. 1901.
222. PQ 99/6, 7, Young to J.Samuelson, 17.9.1901.
223. ibid., Young to ? 20. 11. 1901.
224. ibid.
225. ibid., Young to Pennant, 13. 5. 1903.
226. ibid., Young to Penrhyn, 15. 5. 1903.
227. ibid., 31. 10. 1903.
228. ibid., 3. 11. 1903.
229. ibid., 30. 12. 1903.
230. This is guesswork. 101 returned in the four weeks up to 31. 10. 1903, 96 in the first fortnight of November, a rate which presumably increased further following the 'official' ending of the dispute: by December it would appear that as many as twenty a day were returning. It would not, therefore, appear unreasonable to estimate that at least 500 men returned between October 1st and December 30th. In May 1902, however, Young was already claiming that there were 900 "now working happily" PQ 100/42.
- Young t o ? 17. 5. 1902.

231. PQ 99/6, 7. Lord Penrhyn to Rev.Howell Roberts.
Clynnog, 12. 1. 1903.
232. ibid., Young to Penrhyn 31. 10. 1903, Young
to Wynne Jones. 9. 12. 1901.
233. "The Italians are a very good set of workmen
six are miners and very good they are. We had
never any trouble with them, no tinkers or
noisy men and willing to work every hour day
or night overtime on Saturday afternoon and
Sunday ", wrote A.C.Heire, Frongoch Mine,
Devils Bridge, Cardiganshire to Young,
5. 3. 1902. (PQ 100/42.)
234. ibid., Davies to Young, 4. 9. 1902.
235. ibid., H.Hughes, Glasinfryn to Young 3. 10. 1902;
He was three weeks out of the army. William
Owen had been a private in the Liverpool
Regiment ibid., 17. 9. 1902.
236. ibid., J.Davies to Young 17. 6. 1902.,
21. 7. 1902. He had originally been refused
entry.
237. ibid., Jones to Young 10. 1. 1902. H.O.Jones
originally from Bethesda, had moved to Crewe
to work after he had failed to get into the
quarry in 1891, a firman on the L.N.W.R.
he was given work in the slate mill.
238. ibid., D.D.Davies to H.P.Meares, 24. 6. 1902,
re. David Parry of Mynydd Llandegai who was
taken on after a severe warning despite having
been dismissed in 1896 and being " a rambler and
greatly addicted to drink " .
239. e.g. ibid., 18. 8. 1902., G.O.Griffiths of
Tregarth who had been suspended five years

earlier " for being on the spree for a few days " was refused work as he was considered " a confirmed drunkard... one of the most besotted men in the neighbourhood " .

240. e.g. ibid., Davies to Young 16. 10. 1902.
re Moses Jones, Sling, who had been dismissed in 1897 and then re-employed in November 1901; being found drunk at his work for the fourth time he was discharged as " incorrigible " ibid., 12. 4. 1902., re. William Griffith Williams who, dismissed for drink in 1897 had been re-employed after June 11th and had been suspended after being found drunk at work at 8.15.a.m.
241. ibid., Young to Editor Liverpool Daily Post.
29. 1. 1902.
242. ibid., Davies to Young. 23. 7. 1902.
243. PQ 99/6 , 7. Young to Trench 17. 4. 1902.
Thirty three of those who applied for work in June 1901 failed to attend, one gave his 'ticket' to the strike committee and accepted a railway fare to South Wales. PQ 100/42
D.D.Davies to Young 12. 8. 1902.
244. PQ 100/42. Thomas Jones to Young 20. 6. 1902;
Jones, from Talysarn, wanted to take a contract in Penrhyn, but not a bargain as " people at Nantlle and other places would speak about him and say thay he has gone to Penrhyn to take another man's living " .
245. PQ 99/6, 7. Young to Wynne Jones 9. 12. 1901.
246. see pp. 373-4, 383.
247. PQ 99/6, 7. Young to Wynne Jones. 9. 12. 1901.

248. Firm evidence could, of course, be offered by production figures for the periods before and during the strike but the evidence here, though plentiful, defies accurate interpretation; see PQ 47/5 Slates brought from Quarry 1891 - 1905, PQ 36/2 Quarry Slate Books, PQ 100/144.
249. Daily News, 2. 7. 1901. p.7.
250. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 25. 6. 1901.
251. PQ 173.
252. PQ 265.
253. " Some of the late employees who are desirous of resuming work contemplate removing from the worst districts.... into lodgings at Bangor ". Young to Editor, Liverpool Daily Post, 29. 1. 1902. PQ 100/42. see also Young to Penrhyn 27. 3. 1902. PQ 99/6, 7. see also Appendix.3.
254. PQ 100/42, Young to W.J.Pritchard, 24. 9. 1902.
255. PQ 99/6, 7, Lord Penrhyn to Rev. H.Roberts, 12. 1. 1903.
256. PQ. 100/42. Young to ? 20. 5. 1902.
257. " I have his name on the Black List ", wrote Davies to Young about Edward Davies, 16. 6.1902. (PQ 100/42.)
258. Richard Wynne Pritchard, according to Davies was " one of the first we put on the Excluded List " *ibid.*, Davies to Young, 17. 6. 1903. There was also reference to a " bad list " *ibid.*, 30. 1. 1902.
259. See Appendix.3.

260. R.G.Pritchard, a member of the strike committee, firmly believed that there was a spy close to the decision making. Information given privately by his grandson, Gwyn Pritchard, June, 1970.
261. PQ 99/6, 7. Vincent to D. Pritchard. 18. 5. 1902.
262. GAS DQ 2045. John Jones to W.W.Vivian n.d. see also DQ 2036. Jones to Vivian, 3. 11. 1900.
263. PQ 99/6, 7. Young to Lord Penrhyn, 31.10.1903.
264. PQLB 404-406, Young to Pennant, 2. 6. 1898.
265. See Appendix 3.
266. PQ 13/2, General Cash Book, 15. 11. 1900, 12. 12. 1900; 14. 12. 1900; 15. 1. 1900. £11 was earmarked for expenses.
267. ibid., 2. 11. 1903.
268. PQ 99/6, 7. Young to Trench, 29. 11. 1900.
269. See, for example, the list of applicants for 12, Tregarth Houses, PQ 100/43. 13.5.1903. All twelve applicants were "loyal" to some degree.
270. PQ 100/42. Davies to Young 5. 4. 1902.
271. PQ 99/6, 7. Young to Penrhyn, 31. 10. 1903.
272. ibid., 3. 11. 1903.
273. ibid., 30. 12. 1903.
274. PQ 100/44, J. Buckley to Young, 6. 1. 1904.
275. PQ 100/43. n.d. see Appendix 3.
276. The two most prominent were Melancthan Williams and David Pritchard, both of Tregarth.
277. They were Anglicans - so was Henry Jones, Chairman of the strike committee; they ran in families - in November 1901 the nephew of

Griffith Edwards, Treasurer of the strike committee, went back; they lived in the same streets - Henry Jones' next door neighbour went back in February 1903.

278. PQ 100/42, "Henry", Aberdare, to his parents
20. 3. 1902.

279. There is still a street known locally in Bethesda as "Tell-tale street". The word "bradwr" (traitor) can still crop up in playground disputes. (Information given by the headmaster of a school in the Bethesda district, August 1970.)

1. The National Dimension.

The disputes at the Penrhyn Quarries in 1896 - 7 and 1900 - 03 were of national import, seen by both the trade union movement and by the anti-union, "free labour", lobby as being of crucial importance. These were years of notable defeats for the labour movement above all the crushing of the Engineers' struggle in 1898; here in Bethesda was a struggle for the rights of trade unionism which could, and did, catch the imagination.

The trade union movement rallied impressively to the defence of the quarrymen, the obstinate and imperious Lord Penrhyn being a gift to any labour orator and his lordship's wealth and cruelty were castigated on many a platform up and down the country. In 1902 the Trades Union Congress at its London congress passed unanimously a motion proposed by John Ward of the Navvies and General Labourers and seconded by Hugh Boyle of the Northumberland Miners which expressed 'Congress' "utmost contempt at the continued obstinacy of Lord Penrhyn" and pledged the delegates "to render assistance, both by money and Parliamentary agitation to enable the men to carry their struggle against arbitrary feudalism and landlordism to a successful conclusion". (1)

In the discussion D.R.Daniel spoke of the "unbroken spirit and determination to continue the struggle" of his union's members, Pete Curran of the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers told Congress how he had visited Bethesda four times in the previous twelve months and William Abraham appealed to the trade unionist of the country to

"come to the rescue at this juncture and do something tangible to make defeat impossible". (2)

In the following year's Congress the President referred to the Penrhyn struggle as

" unique in the history of trade union fights at least here in England, (sic) It ought not to be in the power of one man to place the lives and interests of so many thousands in jeopardy " (3)

and the Parliamentary Committee reported on its efforts to achieve support for the Penrhyn men. (247)

In early 1901 the N.W.Q.U. launched an appeal " To the Trades Unions " and emphasised that any moneys donated would be distributed to union members only and would not go toward alleviating the " general destitution of the locality ". (5) £20,518 (6) was collected in this way with contributions coming from hundreds of trade union branches throughout the country; (276) in May 1901 alone there were 155 trade union donations totalling £1,278. 5s. 5d. (287) Some of the donations received were massive: £1,000, in two instalments from the Operative Bricklayers Society, London; (298) £400 in three instalments from the South Wales Miners Federation with a great deal more contributed by individual lodges and districts. (310) Many others made smaller donations such as the 30/- sent by the Aberavon branch of the National Association of Shop Assistants in December 1902. (11) And it was not only official donations by branch committees which swelled the fund: collections, the pennies of individual workmen, accounted for £2 from the Chatham docks; £6. 7. 0d. and £6. 3. 6d. from the Great Mountain, Tumble, and Onllwyn, Dulais Valley, collieries respectively; (12) miners in Rhosllanerchrugog imposed a levy of threepence a week on all union members in February 1901. (13) The list of donations, month by month, reads like a

Catalogue of the British trade union movement. Donations came from overseas as well, £17 from the General Slaters Union of Pennsylvania in May 1901, £167 in all from the United States. (2143)

The men's case was taken up vigorously and early by the Daily News and was energetically and ably argued by that paper's editor, Clement Edwards; the London Central Committee, set up by the Daily News collected over £3, 600, (2151) much of it in street collections and meetings. In the East End

" the poor responded splendidly... In Bethnal Green, a district that raised over £300 for the men, £25 was subscribed in farthings ", (216)

remarkable testimony of how far the Penrhyn question moved British workers. (217)

Innumerable meetings and demonstrations were held up and down the country: there was a mass meeting in the Memorial Hall, London, in May 1901; in November 1902 there were a series of meetings and parades in support of the Penrhyn quarrymen

" under the auspices of the various East London trade union and Temperance organisations ", support coming from stevedoves, cabdrivers, carpenters, carmen, waiters and the Phoenix Society. (218)

The Penrhyn dispute was a great working class issue, seen as a battle of upright workers against a dictatorial and 'noble' employer for basic trade union rights. Bethesda itself became an essential town to visit for prominent trade unionists and socialists: George Barnes, Pete Curran, Allen Gee, Isaac Mitchell, Ben Tillet, Robert Blatchford, Keir Hardie and Mabon all came to offer their solidarity, many of them to

speak at mass meetings. A host of less renowned working class organisers also made their appearances;

Mr. Bellcher, a London socialist, Mr. Brewer of the General Workers' Union, Mr. Kirkham of the Bolton Labour Church, Mr. Riley of the Huddersfield I.L.P. and A.M. Thompson, the Clarion's "Dangle".

Other newspapers, the Northern Weekly, the Morning Leader, the Clarion, followed the Daily News' example in setting up funds in support of the struggle, though the £5,600 they collected was sent to the Penrhyn Relief Fund rather than to the N.W.Q.U. Fund. (19) The Penrhyn Relief Fund, the chairman of which was W.J. Parry, the secretary the Rev. W.W. Lloyd, was a charitable fund the aim of which was to alleviate the general distress. (20) Bethesda was divided into 14 districts each with a sub-committee, applications for aid were investigated by the sub-committee, discussed by the general committee and then paid in kind or by tickets. The ticket system was designed to help not only those in distress but also the shopkeepers by ensuring that those receiving aid bought their goods in Bethesda shops. The fund's main source of income were the three chairs from Bethesda (21) who toured the country to great acclamation and who between them collected almost £33,000 (22) The N.W.Q.U. fund and the Penrhyn Relief Fund together collected a massive £88,122 between early 1901 and the summer of 1903.

While the 1896 - 7 dispute was still in progress Frederick Millar's The Liberty Review, a waspish right-wing monthly, warned that any fund set up to defend the right of combination in Penrhyn,

" should be met by another fund to defend the right of an employer to manage his business free from

the dictation of Trade Union bosses and the
impertinent interference of a Government department.
Lord Penrhyn deserves the best thanks of every
capitalist and employer in the United Kingdom.." (23)

Lord Penrhyn, as it happens, had no need of outside
funds but he had plenty of friends nationally eager and
willing to argue the case of an employer putting up a

" plucky single handed fight with the disreputable
and besmirched labour-union gang ". (24)

For if Penrhyn was a cause for the trade union
movement it was a cause also for all those who argued
for an employers' offensive against trade union
" interference " .

William Collison's National Free Labour Association,
the Liberty and Property Defence League, and Frederick
Millar's Employers' Parliamentary Committee were all
vocal and influential supporters of Penrhyn's stand.
The National Free Labour Association, (25) an
organisation the stated aims of which were employers'
unity, counteracting the abuses

" of trade unionism, actively opposing picketing
and supplying " free labour " during disputes (26)

was more than a mere vociferous front and claimed
in 1902 to have " defeated upwards of over 500 senseless
strikes... organised the Great Revolt of
intelligent workmen against the tyranny of Trade-
unionism and... enrolled 351,000 under the Banner of
Free Labour ". (27)

In his journal Free Labour Collison argued that " the
Penrhyn quarries of North Wales... bid fair to prove
epoch making in the industrial annals of the country ". (28)

Both Free Labour and the Liberty Review delighted

in attacking the quarrymen. During the 1896 - 7 dispute Free Labour commented that the men of Bethesda had,

" discovered that it is much more agreeable to send round the hat and divide the proceeds in idleness than to go back to the quarries, and so long as the milch-cow of the Unions holds out you may depend upon it the Welsh quarrymen will stick tenaciously to the udder ". (329)

Their leaders were " a cabal of fire-eating and ranting stump orators aided and abetted by a process of violence and outrage upon non-unionist ". (330)

In similar vein The Liberty Review explained how " the quarrymen are doing the Christmas carol business at suburban chapels with pleasure and profit to all concerned, it is easier work than splitting slates ". (331)

And a note of English exasperation with the radical Welsh creeps in: " a gang of little Bethelite preachers and Radical rowdies " ; (332) in 1897 the men would all have gone back but for fear of being stoned to death by the " gentle, cultured, submissive mountain folk, perhaps by the Bethesda choir " (333); in 1900 there were " cowardly and brutal assaults committed by the simple, pious, overfed slate quarrymen ", the " Bethesda hooligans ". (334)

Penrhyn also had a somewhat less raucous ally in The Times but his own relations with the organised anti-union lobby were close, and particularly after his refusal to allow Ritchie at the Board of Trade to intervene in the dispute under the terms of the 1896 Conciliation Act, he became the hero of that lobby. George Livesey of the Southern Metropolitan Gas Co.,

himself a scourge of trade unions, wrote admiringly in December 1900 that "the tyranny of Trades Unions would never have attained such a power if more of the employers were of the same stamp as Lord Penrhyn". (35)

These, of course, were Young's sentiments, and his, and Lord Penrhyn's, allegiance to the notions of Free Labour was unquestionable. In the first month of the years of crisis, September 1896, Young explained that,

"the crisis which we have now arrived at will in the long run be a great benefit to all Quarry proprietors and in fact many other employers of labour also". (36)

Young and Penrhyn saw themselves in the vanguard of a national employers' offensive against trade unionism and their stand was appreciated as such by others: in an article on Penrhyn the Liberty Review called upon "employers... whenever possible (to) repudiate this so-called collective bargaining, which is injurious to everybody but the trade union bosses who thrive on labour disputes". (37) Penrhyn's role in the general campaign was greatly valued, he was considered "the one man in the realm who has done most for the freedom of labour" for

"it is indubitable that Lord Penrhyn's courageous fight for the mastership of his own quarry was very largely responsible for the great triumph of the rights of employers against labour-union oppression which resulted from the engineering dispute of 1897 - 8. Lord Penrhyn's success was of the utmost encouragement to the winning side in that long fight". (38)

Significant praise indeed! And praise echoed by many individual employers. (39)

The suggestion that the whole business was a socialist plot, first made by the Cambrian News (40) and later popularised in the pamphlet Tilletism at Bethesda, was also one that greatly delighted anti-labour organisations. In 1901 the Free Labour Congress noted that the strikers were prompted,

" by the desire on the part of socialist leaders to control the Quarries at Bethesda for the spread of socialism and its anti-economic and subversive theories ". (341)

They had earlier made an even more startling reference to " the raid on the slate quarries of Lord Penrhyn by the I.L.P. for the purpose of experimenting in Marxian Socialism ". (421)

Young and Penrhyn shared Free Labour's paranoic distaste for trade unionists and socialists and were eager supporters of its campaigns: in October 1897 Young donated £50 to the National Free Labour Association and a further £100 " towards the initial expenses connected with the establishment " of the organisation, which sum, he presumed, would " enable you to place the names of both Lord Penrhyn and myself on the list of members ". (43) Donations were also made to the Employers' Parliamentary Council (44) and further donations to the N.F.L.A. (45)

Even more important than this formal membership of the N.F.L.A. was the N.F.L.A.'s direct relationship with the slate industry in the figure of W.W.Vivian, for Vivian, manager of the nearby Dinorwic Quarries, was a member of the Association's ten man executive committee. (46) Vivian's role in Penrhyn's troubles is unclear, he was certainly in close consultation with

Young at the onset of the dispute in September 1896 and Young was mindful of the fact that he would lend him "aid at any moment, if called upon" (47)

In November 1900 collusion between the two managers seems to have been closer with Vivian offering Young advice which, in its intransigence, he was to faithfully carry out. Close the quarry, Vivian advised, for it was "the only course... open to you consistent with your duty", and furthermore "be firm and do not think now of taking back those you have decided not to re-employ". Vivian spoke the language of Collison and Millar. "Beyond doubt", he told Young,

"if you wish peace in the future, you must obtain this discipline even if the soldiers have to be called out, for if you give way in the very least, I am confident graver troubles will arise in the near future, so I urge you on no account to give way one tittle over this question of discipline".
(48)

Vivian was free also with detailed advice as to the practical course Young should follow and it appears as if he might even have drafted some of the notices put out by Young in November 1900. (49) There is no evidence of Vivian's guiding hand in the affairs of Penrhyn after this date but the degree of his involvement in November 1900 would suggest that it would not have been altogether missing. What is certainly clear is that the strident politics of "Free Labour" must be seen as having been in the forefront of the Penrhyn attack even if Collison was not to directly supply the quarry with his 'free' workers. (50)
The Penrhyn Quarry may have been remote and its workers

isolated but the issues raised by the dispute were at the centre of a crucial national debate on the 'rights' of trade unions and employers, and both sides in that debate inscribed the struggle on their respective banners.

2. "In a knot one with the other."

"Man", it was generally accepted in Bethesda, "does not live by bread alone" (51)- but sustenance had to be found by these strikers as by any others. The main source of the community's income during the period of the dispute was the work of its absent sons. Most of these worked in the coal mines of South Wales but some were scattered throughout the country, Liverpool being the other main centre. Scores left immediately the quarry closed on November 22nd 1900 (52) Within three weeks it was claimed that some 1800 had left (53) though the figure given in December 1902 seems more reasonable, (54) it was then estimated that there were some 1300 working away, 100 working in Bethesda's small but friendly Pant Dreiniog quarry, 100 travelling the country with the Penryhn choirs and some 700 living in Bethesda. The importance of this large number away was twofold: it meant that most of the strikers were self-supporting, it also meant that in Bethesda itself the two rival sections were more equally divided than they would have been. This would explain why major trouble was dependent on the periodic return of the men working away, and it might also explain why the blacklegs were able to defy the pressures put on them.

Despite the working quarrymen there was severe hardship.

For those who stayed there was no work; those who went away could find only unskilled jobs, slate quarrymen took time to learn how to become coal miners, on top of which there was the pressure of maintaining two homes, one for the man near his workplace, the other for his family in Bethesda; others found their new jobs intolerable and drifted back to Bethesda. (55) "The suffering", as Lloyd George exclaimed, "is intense... These men have endured hardships that I cannot depict". (56)

To ease the suffering there were two major sources of funds: the trade union movement, and the Penrhyn Relief Fund. The North Wales Quarryman's Union was a member, in the lowest section, of the General Federation of Trades Unions and as such was entitled to 2/6d per member, lock-out pay. (57) This, however, only applied to financial members, i.e. men who had been Union members for over one year; in the Penrhyn Lodge there were 560 of these out of a total of 1,750 members. N.W.Q.U. strike pay also depended on length of membership, those members for up to 13 months received 6/- per week; up to 2 years, 7/6d; 3 years, 10/-; 5 years, 12/6d. The majority of the men therefore received only 6/-d. a week in official N.W.Q.U. strike pay. (58)

Money came from the N.W.Q.U. fund and the Penrhyn Relief fund, the latter relying heavily on the money collected by the three choirs from Bethesda who toured the country. The labour movement mobilised impressively to financially sustain the struggle (59) and the aid from this quarter seemed all the more generous in comparison to the lack of response from the quarrymen's traditional allies, the nonconformist Liberal establishment. The response was also disappointing from other North

Wales quarrymen.

The Bethesda men thus had a telling lesson in solidarity and could see clearly who their friends were. The effects of this lesson became increasingly apparent as the months passed. The Herald Cymraeg noted in an editorial of May 1901 that the shipbuilders of Sunderland and the engineers of Manchester were helping the men of Penrhyn more than the quarrymen of Caernarfonshire and Merioneth. (60) In July another editorial asked whose fault it was that the North Wales quarrymen were doing so little. (61) The same complaint was raised again in October 1902 and the inactivity of North Wales quarrymen was condemned by one of the strikers in November of that year,

" the awful thing is that our fellow quarrymen in North Wales can sit down and smoke, and watch Bethesda's quarrymen fighting the battle while all England's workers are enraged ". (62)

North Wales quarrymen were not quite as apathetic as this criticism might suggest. Demonstrations and meetings in support of the Penrhyn men were held in other quarrying districts: as in Penygroes, (63) and Blaenau Ffestiniog in the summer of 1901. (64) Speakers from other quarries carried their support to the mass meetings, (65) sometimes some took part in the disturbances as when men from Llanberis broke some contractors' windows in Bethesda. (66) But these were isolated cases, the Penrhyn men had the support of militants from other quarries but they failed to get any active support from the mass of North Wales quarrymen.

To an important extent this was a failure of mobilization. The N.W.Q.U., at the G.F.T.U.'s bidding, did circulate 10,000 leaflets in November 1901 calling on all quarrymen to

join the union (67) and the results seem to have been encouraging. (68) But the crucial issue was the levy. In May 1902 the union executive sent to the lodges a request for comments on the suggestion that a toll be levied for three months to make up the Union's depleted finances. (69) In August the lodges replied: nine were for some kind of levy, two were undecided, and one was against. After a lengthy discussion however it was decided to refer the question back again to the lodges (70) with the suggestion that they accept a levy of 6d per member per month for three months. At the next meeting on August 29th a decision was postponed for another month, by October the lodges appear not to have replied. (71) There the matter was dropped until July 1903 when the G.F.T.U. demanded a levy of 1/-d a month on all members as a condition for further funds, (72) this was accepted at a general meeting of the Union. But a month later the G.F.T.U., insisted on a levy of 1/-d per week. (73) This was rejected as being,

" totally impracticable... we believe that the result of this would be to lay a bigger burden on our Union than it can bear, and create a loss rather than an increase ". (74)

Even though a majority of quarrymen had voted for a levy the Union knew that many, if not most, had not voted at all: in Dinorwic, for example, where there had been a vote of 332 to 38 in favour of a levy, 647 men had not voted at all. (75) An imposed levy was therefore seen as a real threat to the Union and quarrymen's contributions remained largely voluntary and in its fear of alienating the mass of the membership the Union failed to effectively mobilise the hundreds of quarry trade unionists who were willing to offer active solidarity.

Also in sharp contrast to the activity of the Labour movement was the relative inactivity of Welsh Liberalism. It has been suggested that Welsh Liberalism's response to the Penrhyn strike was one of " immediate interest and sympathy ". (76) The evidence, however, suggests a different attitude: William Jones, his silver-tongued eloquence apart, did no more than the minimum expected from a constituency M.P., and while it is true that Lloyd George made some references to Penrhyn (77) in truth he could hardly fail not to, and it was not until 1903 that he pushed the issue, that is, not until the Liberal Party leadership had noted its parliamentary and electoral worth. It was not until April 1903 that, at a meeting in London, Lloyd George and William Jones set up a committee to organise a Welsh movement in support of the quarrymen, (78) a movement which does not seem to have grown any further than its inception. The " Welsh party " came under bitter attack for its indifference; in the Daily News, (79) Lloyd George and William Jones were personally attacked and it was noted that, disillusioned with Liberal parliamentarians, " an attempt will be made from Bethesda to force the matter on the attention of the House, through the agency of the Labour members ". Keir Hardie made the point in 1903 that " for three years the I.L.P. has been giving practical help and support to those men at Bethesda whilst the Liberal Party waited for three years until " it made a pretence of coming to their rescue ". (80)

The indifference of the Liberal hierarchy was emphasised by the activities of the Bangor magistrates who were instrumental in the calls for troops to the area, mostly Liberal and Nonconformist, they were

criticized for " caring more for the interest of party than the needs of the locality ". (81) The lessons of class were being learnt; that the middle class, Welsh and Nonconformist and Radical as it may be, was not to be trusted. The position was made very clear in a fiery speech by W.H.Williams in August, 1901 (.82)

" For half a century the workers of Wales have been used to push up the middle class; but how is that middle class treating the workers today?..... We have lived too long on the charity of people like this, but now the workers are fighting their own cause, and that is their hope... Let the worker take care of his own welfare first, and be in a knot one with the other. The workers of England have shaken off the middle class; and have taken the workers of Wales into that knot with them ". The same point was made again a fortnight later by D.R.Daniel. (83) If the N.W.Q.U., leaders were later to reject direct Labour representation and " argue convincingly for sectionalism within the existing party structure " (.84) during 1901-2 some of them were also arguing for what sounds very much like independent labour representation. President of the Union, W.W. Jones, was the most persistent advocate of Labourism, in October 1901 he sorrowed that there were not more labour representatives in Parliament, but looked forward confidently to a " pretty strong Labour party before long, strong enough to rule the other two parties." (85) He repeated the point again in April 1902 insisting that " the oppression they suffer will not be moved until they get the reins of the government of the country into the hands of workers' representatives ". (.86) " Parliament ",

he cried " should be transformed^{not} into a workshop of oppression but into a home of freedom ". His opinions were echoed among the quarrymen; William Williams, Frondgeg, member of a past Penrhyn strike committee argued that

" the duty of the workers was to send to Parliament a strong united body of labour representatives " . (87) while Owen Griffith, Vice-Chairman of the 1900 - 03 Committee called in May 1903 for more Labour M.P.s., pointing out that though " they already had men who loved labour's cause... they, as a class, had no power over them " . (88)

These sentiments found some expression in a resolution passed at the May 1903 conference of the N.W.Q.U. which realised " That it would be in our interest as trade unionists to have a paid member to look after our welfare in Parliament " (89) and though William Jones was regarded as being reasonably sensitive to the demands of Arfon's quarrymen there were attempts to remove Osmond Williams from his seat in Meirioneth. (90)

Not only did Labourism become a strong feature of the men's consciousness in 1901 - 2 but socialism also made an appearance, though it was not cogently argued and was a vague and ill-defined doctrine: thus we have D.R. Daniel arguing that

" Unionism is something temporary and a day will come when it will not be needed for then there will be no master and no worker, but everyone will be both master and worker " . (91)

Only W.W. Jones seems to have had a theoretical grasp of socialism,

" it is obvious that the whole life of the world stems

completely from two sources.. materials in the earth and the ability in the worker's arm...

ownership or capital are secondary things ". (92)

In Februar y 1902 he pointed out that

" Lord Penrhyn and his officials, after all, are only the smallest teeth in the cogs of the great wheel of society. If they were knocked out the machine would not slow down, but the wheel could not turn at all without the workers ". (93)

That he was not alone, but that the N.W.Q.U. executive generally must have been sympathe tic to socialism, at least to a Fabian version, is shown by the Union's unprecedented step of November 1901 (94) in buying and distributing 1,000 copies of the Rev. J. Elifford's Fabian Tract, translated into Welsh, " Socialism and Christ's teaching " in which it is stated that

" w e seek, like the early Christians, with a fiery enthusiasm to make Society a materialisation of the co-ownership principle rather than the individual principle ". (95)

Independent socialist or labour organisations, however, did not appear; not until 1908 was Bethesda to have an I.L.P. branch. (96) Even W.W.Jones' socialism led him to advocate not the nationalization of the means of production but the nationalization of the land. And most of the appeals for Labour representation seem to have been made within a Lib-Lab rather than an independent Labour context; Mabon was as popular as Keir Hardie with the men of Bethesda.

This confusion in political expression and articulation however should not hide the underlying changes in consciousness: they were fighting now as

workers, not as Welshmen or Nonconformists: they were fighting " the battle of all the workers in the kingdom " . (97) They had indeed, as W.H.Williams had advocated, " shaken off the middle-class " , W.J.Parry, Bethesda's most prominent radical bourgeois was still active, but in organising charity not in leading the Union. The Welsh Liberal Establishment was opposing the Education Bill and the Boer War and the Beer, all issues the quarrymen too felt strongly about: but in their crucial struggle they found themselves alone " now the workers are fighting their own cause " . Even the very Radical local Welsh press was proving unsatisfactory: at the 1903 May conference of the N.W.Q.U. the Bethesda lodge proposed that " we have... a newspaper for the workers " . (98) The cautious steps into politics did not show a fiery labour independence but they did show a new suspicion of their old allies the Radical middle-class Liberals: at the first executive meeting of the N.W.Q.U. following the collapse of the struggle in November 1903, Henry Jones raised the matter of workers representation on the County Councils (99) and it was later passed that a close investigation be made " into the beliefs and feelings of every candidate to the various councils to determine whether the rights of Labour claim his greatest attention " . (100)

These were indeed the techniques of sectionalism but they pointed to the breakdown of the monolithic Liberal Party, to splits in that Welsh Nonconformist Radical tradition which had dominated North Wales since 1868. A class consciousness was appearing out of the Liberal hoth-potch of Nationalism and religiosity.

The development of this consciousness however was uneven and stunted. The past and the exigencies of events dragged heavily and offered other answers. Nationalism, despite the generosity of the English, was still a force; Lord Penrhyn after all was an Englishman and an Anglican and though W.W.Jones did not wish

" to say a word against the freedom of Englishmen to come to Wales... if they come here to oppress and to lay the yoke of oppression on the shoulders of the workers until their patience run out, then they must take the responsibility for the consequences ". (101)

The battle being fought, he called " the battle for nationalism " (102) and it was seen as such by many, a telegram from strikers working in Porth exclaimed that

" We exalt Snowdonia, our culture, ourselves, our country, our race, and our Welsh pulpit by keeping our oath and standing like men. Better death than betrayal ". (103)

The old question of the land was also grasped as a solution. There were rumblings for the expropriation of Penrhyn in March and April 1903 and claims were made that the mountain which the quarry was slowly removing had " within the memory of those now alive been common land under the Crown ". (104) But these demands seem to have come more from the Radical press and Lloyd George than from the quarrymen themselves. (105)

Another projected solution was a co-operative quarry. This was not a new idea, the N.W.Q.U. had invested £2,000 in a co-operative quarry in 1881 (106) and the initiative seems to have come in 1903 as it did in 1881, from W.J.Parry. In July 1903 the North Wales Quarries Ltd.(107)

was established and was followed by the setting up later of the National Co-op Quarries. (108!) The co-op venture was supported by Liberal newspapers (109) and Lib-Lab politicians but the whole project was out of the hands of the quarrymen themselves. A small quarry was procured but the attempt to make it a real source of alternative employment to the Penrhyn Quarry was a signal failure. That this was an attempt firmly outside the quarrymen's control was forcefully shown when there were complaints by workmen of " Penrhynism " at the " co-op " quarry and representations were made to the N.W.Q.U. to take action against the North Wales Quarries Ltd., (110).

The culture which collided with Lord Penrhyn in November 1900 did not, as we have seen, involve the quarryman alone. The complex mixture of religious conviction, middle class radicalism and trade unionism was put under a severe strain which showed clearly enough the tensions and antagonisms inherent in it. In particular the local Welsh middle-class found themselves out of step; fighting, as usual, the power of English landlordism but no longer leading that fight, overwhelmed by the quarrymen acting on their own behalf. The quarries had created a new class, propertyless and industrial and active but the quarrymen were acting in a social and political context frozen by the battles of previous generations, complicated by the still incompleting victory of the Nonconformist Welsh bourgeoisie over semi-feudal landlordism. As well as its own battle trade unionism was having to fight the battle which Welsh middle-class Radicalism had still not won.

In the end the mix held despite betrayal and

indifference, for though the quarryman came to act on his own behalf and to talk with his own voice the words were often those of middle class radicalism. But while the quarrymen had earlier been mobilised by the radicals for service in their struggle against landlordism and Anglicanism in 1900 the Bethesda quarrymen mobilised themselves for action for their own purposes: they certainly fought as Welshmen and as Nonconformists but they also fought consciously as workers. Failing to control this movement the radicals either involved themselves in charitable action or fell into a sulky and sullen sympathy; the quarrymen came to shiver from the keen chill of their support. A new consciousness, a new identity, was being made, struggling within and away from the claims and patterns of the past. The language of class did not come easily but the nature of the struggle forced out the words, articulated the clumsy syllables.

3. A pool which is called in Hebrew, Bet-hesda... (111)

The people of Bethesda took their religion very seriously; for many of them the chapel was an obsessive preoccupation consuming all their spare time. It is not surprising therefore that the rhetoric of the pulpit is constantly used during mass meetings nor that salvationist religious positions are put forward from the beginning. What is significant is the way in which such a fundamentalist position, from being the solution proposed by a minority of zealots comes by the end of 1903 to be an important

and generally accepted definition of the struggle.

The rhetoric and the imagery are from the beginning Biblical: the commonest image that of the tribes of Israel in the wilderness,

" If the quarrymen... return from the wilderness into the land of captivity there, without doubt, they will stay for generations... But the faces of the tribes are turned to the land that is seen; and they are determined to travel toward the Jordan, even if they fail to reach the promised land ". (112)

After each mass meeting the men sang the hymn, " Rwyn'sgweld o bell y dydd yn dod ", (113) (I see from afar the day is coming). The chapels played a full part in the struggle, the ministers being solid with the men; helping with relief and other tasks. The only noticeable effect of their intervention on policy was their efforts to maintain peace. (114) The chapel and union hierarchy, in fact, were linked, the strike committee was made up of, " the leading men of the district, leaders of religion ". (115) The Vice-Chairman, Owen Griffith was himself a deacon of Gerlan chapel, William Williams, another prominent member of the committee was a deacon of Carneddi chapel. (116)

The fundamentalist chapel view had been posed early to the mass meetings: R.R.Jones in June 1901 urged them to leave the issue in His hands and make it a matter of prayer, then they could be sure that all would work out. (117) In November 1902 the men were urged to " be submissive before God and leave everything in His hands ". (118)

The attitude to these religious answers was simply that, " The Kingdom of God will not come by waiting ". (119)

W.H. Williams went as far as to suggest that " They can contribute toward the ministry if they wish; but that is not necessary " (120) but they must care for the poor.

It was not in its purely salvationist, other worldly aspect that fundamentalism was to become important, but rather in its emphasis on sacrifice and suffering. Writing before the struggle started, W.J. Parry noted that the religious history of the community, the struggle to maintain Nonconformity in the face of a hostile, Anglican landlord had made them " more eager to sacrifice on the altar of service ". (121) This element of sacrifice and a consciousness of its assumed beneficial effects was present throughout the dispute. W.H. Williams in November 1900 talked of those " who had brought the sins of the people on to their shoulders "; such sacrifice, he claimed, " would not fall dead to the ground ". (122) A year later he drew attention to the fact that

" all who try to follow His paths by attempting to raise the lowest class"

must always be persecuted. (123) But it was not until 1903 that this attitude came to the forefront.

On New Year's Eve 1902 the press and police were prepared for a revival of the violence which had exploded into a near riot when the previous year had been born. All however passed quietly, there was no riot for

" one could hardly conceive that this sad crowd had sufficient spirit left to indulge in anything of the kind ". (124)

The reporter went ^{on} to explain that,

" the gnawing heartache caused by hopelessness and the scars of more than two years of struggle and

anxiety had broken the spirits, but not the determination... Hope seemed to have fled, and desolation reigned supreme ". (125)

The struggle had become hopeless, Penrhyn was immovable. Voices of loyal strikers had come to be raised in criticism of the committee's leadership. (126) A note of despair crept into the meetings, in January a striker complained that the committee did nothing but

" urge us to stand out until the windows of Heaven open, or some other windows which, at the moment, no-one knows about ". (127)

A letter to the Herald Cymraeg urged a full conference to settle the matter for

" what reason is there for us to stay out like this, without saying or doing anything but waiting for something that we do not know what it is, nor where it will come from, if indeed it comes from anywhere ". (128)

The criticism was understandable. The point had been reached when defeat could have been admitted. The leaders of the quarrymen, however, had by now come to see their struggle in a different light, it was no longer a trade dispute for a change in the work situation, but an almost religious experience, a salvationist crusade, above all a test.

The theory of suffering had been clearly enunciated by the Congregationalists of Bethania Chapel who in their yearly report for 1902 explained that

" terrible times have overtaken us.. they are Trials poured like the flood on to us to test our fidelity to God, to each other, and to the principles.

And we believe we shall be better men for God

and society as a result of these tragedies. The path to Canaan, in all ages, leads through desert, chaos and pain". (129)

The lock-out became a test, to go back to work was to fall into "temptation". (130) Attention was drawn to Ridley and Latimer, "Who died gloriously despite being burnt", and to John Penri, Wales' own "young martyr". (131)

D.R. Daniel explained that

"a little suffering in the desert for another season would be more of a blessing... than the pleasures of Egypt". (132)

In June, W.H. Williams, in a rousing speech, re-defined the purpose of the battle

"one of the great aims of this struggle was to make better men of us when we came out of the furnace, and if we succeed in getting only 200 purified, the battle will not have been in vain". (133)

The aim of the struggle had become the purification of those involved. This was emphasised by Henry Jones, Chairman of the Committee and the leading speaker at all the meetings since 1900, when, five weeks before the end, he testified that he was

"ready to fight on - yes even if our number is no more than 300, and it would be a privilege for that 300 to be sacrificed for the principles they fought over". (134)

The last weeks of the struggle therefore were sustained by a religious energy, no word was

"heard in the public meetings of victory... the days of the great certainty" (135) were gone.

The committee's only strategy was emigration (136) and a number left for the quarries of the U.S.A. (137)

The only aim was to suffer. The men cracked and during September growing numbers applied for work. (138) Meetings were held to determine whether to stay out or give in; in Bethesda 452 defiantly voted to continue and 76 for a return to work. From four meetings of exiles in South Wales came the same reply: Rhafadr voted 13-2 to continue, Tredegar and the Rhondda were unanimous for the same course, Merthyr pledged to "stay out till death". (139) But famine increasingly became the alternative to submission. (140) and men were forced to apply for work. In a bitter meeting at the beginning of November acrimonious accusations were thrown around the hall, and men publicly announced that they were applying to the quarry manager. The next week Bethesda voted 192 - 161 to give up. Henry Jones bitterly addressed his "fellow traitors". (141) The men in the South did not comment. Bethesda had fallen. When the movement collapsed the men lay still; physically broken, all energy spent.

Not only was their community shattered and on the verge of famine but they had failed also in their impossible struggle for purification. Defeat was total, and the repercussions spread right through the community, including its religious life. For in their struggle for survival the religious energy of the community had run dry; they had staked not only their material belongings but also their God, on the success of the battle. It was not God who had failed them; far worse, it was they who had failed Him.

The effect of the disaster can be traced in the

annual reports of the chapels. (142.) The figures dealt with are, of course, very small, but in such a previously stable and integrated community, changes in chapel membership, even small changes, do hold some significance.

The figures for Jerusalem Methodist Church (143) show a decline in 1900, a steadying out during 1901 and 1902 and a further decline in 1903. What is interesting is the 1903 slide for by that period most of those who were to leave had already left; a good many, perhaps aware that they would never return to Bethesda, might have transferred their chapel membership to chapels nearer their new homes, but others would have lapsed for other reasons.

Perhaps a more sensitive guide to attitudes to the chapels are congregation rather than membership ratings. Capel Gerlan, where these are available, (144), shows a slightly different pattern from Jerusalem: there is a membership decline in 1901 but the congregation remains stable: in 1902 the trends are reversed and the congregation slumps while the membership is static. During 1903 both decline, but, significantly the sharp decline comes in 1904 after the total defeat of the lock-out. Changes in membership figures, as has been suggested earlier, could depend on those away deciding to stay away: the drop in actual attendance, however, means that, unless there was a significant exodus from the town in 1904, some of those going to Gerlan Chapel in 1903 were not doing so in the following year. There is, in fact, no evidence to suggest an exodus in 1904, on the contrary, many of those working away would have returned as the quarry slowly took back almost another 1000 men. Some other cause dissuaded them from worshipping.

The primary reason was the bitterness and personal

unpleasantness which marked the last stages of the dispute(145) as those loyal almost to the end, fell one by one into "temptation". Certainly the chapels were worried about their ex-members in Bethesda who no longer worshipped. Indeed one report seems to imply that those personally alienated are the main group in the body of absentees.

" It can be said that what has taken place in this working area has scattered the Church, and caused a great loss in membership, greater than in any other period of her history. We feel that it would be better for this year not to go into details, hoping that during the coming year many for whom we now feel concern will be restored to health ". (146)

Their hope was finally fulfilled in 1905 when membership rose from 345 to 423. This undoubtedly was a result of the great religious revival that was sweeping Wales in 1904 - 5. What is interesting is that on at least two chapels, Cerlan (147) and Bethania (148) the revival seems to have had little effect. Membership and congregations in Gerlan declined during 1904 and though there was a rise in membership in 1905 the congregation increased only very slightly. Bethania gained only ten members during 1905 and the total membership still remained below the 1902 level. (149) This at a time when the chapels of Wales were overflowing with ecstatic converts.

The revival certainly affected Bethesda during the winter of 1904 - 5, affected it, indeed, with a particular ferocity: but its effects were not what they were elsewhere. The memory of the struggle of 1900 - 03 was an insuperable barrier running through the community, unassailable even by the Holy spirit.

The revival of 1904 - 5 originated in the small village of New Quay in Cardiganshire in October 1904. It is difficult to follow the spread of the revival but it first lit up South West Wales before exploding into the Glamorgan coalfield in early November, when the name of the mysterious " revivalist", Evan Roberts, came to be associated with the outburst. (150) Within two months the whole of Wales was shaking in a paroxysm of salvationist joy. By April 1905 25% of the patients entering the Denbigh asylum were " religious cases ". (151) When the wave subsided in the summer of 1905 it left behind, according to one sceptical observer, some 80,000 converts in the four larger Nonconformist denominations : (152) convictions for drunkenness in Wales dropped from 10,282 in 1904 to 5,490 in 1906. (153)

The revival hit Bethesda in the last week of November when the local Wesleyan avangelist, the Rev. Hugh Hughes, preached on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings to huge congregations in Jerusalem Chapel. (154) The most striking feature of the first weeks was the effect it had on the women of the village: five hundred of them met daily in the afternoons for prayer meetings, an observer described one typical meeting where

" some two dozen unnamed women took an active part. It is not really possible to describe what they did. The meeting was supposed to be a prayer meeting: but it was everything - it was a fellowship meeting (seiat), a singing meeting, a preaching meeting as well. But the spirit of prayer was in everything and some strange happiness frequented the place...many sweet tears were cried by almost every one of the five hundred sisters present." (155)

Young people were also deeply affected and held their own meetings, lasting, on at least one occasion, from half past two in the afternoon until past midnight. (156)

The involment of women and of young people were features of the revival throughout Wales as was the spontaneous nature of meetings with preachers and established local religious leaders often silenced by the insistent stridency of those who had for long been quiet recipients of their dogmas. In January for example, a Sunday School examination in Jerusalem was abandoned when the congregation burst out singing and praying, eventually forcing the examiner to retreat. (157)

Some of the meetings in Bethesda rivalled those anywhere in Wales in their intensity and hysteria, Thus

" Thursday night's meeting was the most awesome.. So far... The tone of the whole area has become quiet after this strange meeting. The feelings were so violent and intense that we feared seeing some going mad under their influence. Mr. Jenkins preached very powerfully. After that Miss Maud Davies sang " Cofia ddweud " (Remember to say) magnificently. As she was finishing someone on the edge of the gallery recited with great feeling Hugh Derfel's hymn " Y Gwr a fu Gynt o dan hoelion " (The Man who was under the nails) and it was then sung so that many said " If heaven was no better than this, who would not be ready to do anything to get there..... How many times it was re-sung? When was such singing ever heard before ? " .

Later in the evening, in the young people's meeting,

" the Dam burst " ,

" several were praying together. Two sisters

and one brother on their knees praying their best in the pew and another brother on his feet in the singing pew praying with all his energy. At one point I could also hear the voice of another sister praying by the door. She raised her arms and shouted..... another girl broke down into loud prayer ". (158)

At another meeting a divine presence was discerned: half way through the meeting, unexceptionable except for a " comforting smell on the whole service ", a man rose to pray and

" there came a sound like a sound from heaven, and it fell as a heavy shower on the congregation. Those who were present can only describe it as a shower falling on everybody in the place until the place was boiling. Some weeping, some groaning, others shouting "Amen", " O diolch ", "Bendigedig", " Dyma ef wedi dod" (Amen, O Thanks, Blessed, He had arrived) And everyone praying. This scene lasted for some quarter of an hour ". (159)

Despite the euphoria engendered by these well attended meetings, however, the revival in Bethesda was not altogether successful. It was estimated in mid-February 1905, that some 120 souls had been saved in Bethesda in the preceeding months, a figure that did not compare very favourably with the 600 saved in Blaenau Ffestiniog or the 500 in the Nantlle Valley. (160) This failure to win sinners from " the world" in Bethesda was a fact bemoaned throughout the months of the r-evival; (161) describing a meeting in January 1905 the Genedl Gymreig noted that it was " a surprise and a disappointment that after such a meeting no-one new stayed behind ". (162.) The problem was only too apparent:

" before we can honestly expect for religious revival in Bethesda as in every other place... it certainly will not do for you to treat each other as brothers and sisters in the chapel, and then pass those same brothers and sisters on the street the next day with a scowl and hostility ". (163)

It was reported in February 1905 that it was generally felt that in Bethesda it was not

" any obvious and rash sins.. that stand in the way of the success of the Holy Spirit.. but the devilish sins the apostle talks of - wrath, anger and betrayal ". (164)

In January and early February there were signs that these obstacles were beginning to be overcome, in one revival meeting some strikers and blacklegs openly embraced one another and prayed for each other (165) and it was reported in mid-January that " the two parties are slowly beginning to melt into one another ". (166)

By early February one reporter was

" greatly hoping that industrial questions will never again become a stumbling block... to the churches as they have been like a nightmare in the past ". (167)

But the revival's influence, powerful and all-embracing as it was, could not solder together the split community. A minor incident outside Penrhyn Quarry in mid-February resulted, according to one report in inciting

" the most bitter feelings between religious brothers, and this, it is feared, has generally overcome the reconciling spirit that had begun to take hold on the local people ". (168)

The revival, therefore, certainly affected the religious life of Bethesda but it left the respective chapels with

their flocks hardly increased. In the revival meetings there was obviously a tremendous straining after reconciliation: " Save this district, Lord, the whole district ", prayed a local youth, " I have felt for some time that there was something in the way, whatever it is.. The English call it a " stumbling block ". We feel it all the time ". (169)

The stumbling-block was the inheritance of hatred bequeathed by the community's three year struggle. What energy remained could not, despite prayer, devotion and divine intervention, overcome that stumbling block.

Writing at the end of 1903 the deacons of Jerusalem MC had sorrowed for they feared that, in their religious work, " there are signs that we are failing from exhaustion ". (170) When the revival, with all its insistent, ecstatic demands, its spiritual challenge and promise came boiling from chapel to chapel the people of Bethesda could not fully respond: they strained to open their hearts to Christ but they could not overcome themselves and allow their kneeling brothers into their hearts as well.

1. The National Dimension.
1. Report TUC London Congress, 1902, p.64.
2. ibid.
3. Report TUC Leicester Congress, 1903, p.40.
4. ibid., p.44.
5. NWQU An Appeal to the Trades Unions. (Feb 1901)
6. NWQU The Penrhyn Quarry Dispute. (1904)
7. see Appendix 2.
8. XNWQU 281. Ledger: contributions towards the Penrhyn dispute, 1901.
9. ibid., also XNWQU 282, 10.9. 1902.
10. XNWQU 282. pp. 170 - 177. The SWMF gave £200 9. 12. 1902; £100 20. 1. 1903, and £100 20. 6. 1903; the Aberdare district donated £150 in 13 contributions, the Rhondda No 1 District £445 in 14 contributions; many individual lodges also contributed e.g. Pembre £10, 13. 5. 1902., Maerdy £10. 5. 5. 1902, Primrose Colliery, Pontardawe £18. 8. 0d.
11. ibid.

12. XNWQU 281.
13. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 19. 2. 1901.
14. XNWQU 281.
15. The Penrhyn Quarry Dispute.
16. London Central Committee Report. (1904)
17. 24, 000 people, contributing a farthing each, would have donated £25.
18. Daily News. 24. 11. 1902.
19. Penrhyn Relief Fund 1904. Statement of Accounts.
20. " Penrhyn Relief Fund ", Bethesda
(Altrincham, 1902.)
21. Two male voice, one ladies choir.
22. Statement of Accounts, op. cit.
23. The Liberty Review, 15. 1. 1897.
24. *ibid.*, 15. 8. 1901.
25. Earlier known as the Free Labour Protection Association.
26. The Liberty Review, 15. 10. 97. p. 292.
27. Free Labour Press (and Industrial Review)
4. 1. 1902.
28. *ibid.*, 15. 5. 97; he also thought
the Pallion Forge in Sunderland " epoch-making "
29. Free Labour, 15. 6. 97.
30. *ibid.*, 14. 11. 1903.
31. The Liberty Review, 15. 2. 97.
32. *ibid.*, 15. 11. 96.
33. *ibid.*, 15. 9. 97.
34. *ibid.*, 15. 11. 1900.
35. PQ 99/6, 7. Livesey to Young, 31. 12. 1900.

336. PQLB 165. Young to Capt. Gower Bancath.
30. 9. 96.
337. The Liberty Review, 15. 7. 97.
338. ibid., 15. 5. 02, also PQ 100/42 Employers' Parliamentary Council to Young, 29. 5. 1902.
339. Many individual employers also wrote to Young offering solidarity and admiration:
W. Smith of South Tottonham wrote begging to thank Lord Penrhyn " for the gallant stand he has made so long against Working-Class Tyranny, a few more like him and Britain would not be " beaten in most of the world's markets abroad "; J. Harris of Harris Cooke and Co. Shoe Manufacturers, Stafford admired his courage in " not submitting to the presumptuous dictation of those paid agitators "; Thomas Ruscham of Northwich saw them as " fighting a good fight " etc. PQ 100/42
8. 9. 1902, 23. 4. 1902, 11. 12. 1902.
340. Cambrian News, 19. 4. 1901.
341. Free Labour Press, 12. 10. 1901 (PQ 100/85)
342. ibid., 1. 6 . 01.
343. Young appears to have been somewhat confused as to who ran the organisation, mistaking Collison for Millar (PQLB 311 11.10.1897, PQLB 312 13. 10. 97.)
344. PQ 99/6,7. 26. 1. 1900.
345. PQ 99/6,7. 14. 8. 1900.
346. PQ 100/85. Free Labour Protection Association Report, 1897,
347. PQLB 154, Young to Vivian 15. 9. 1896.
348. DQ 20 , Transcript of telephone conversation between Vivian and Young 20.11.1900.

49. DQ 2038, 2050, 2054.
50. Though the workmen in the quarry did display some allegiance to the Free Labour Congress PQ 100/85. W.Collison to Melanethan Williams 11.10. 1901. Collison would appear to have interfered with an earlier dispute in North Wales, a 13 week strike at Little Ormes Head Quarry, Llandudno, when the strike failed " the places of the strikers all being filled up ". *ibid.*, NFLA, Advance Press Copy, 9. 10. 1899.
- 2.) " in a knot one with the other "
51. Daily News, 8. 1. 1901.
52. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 27. 11. 1900.
53. *ibid.*, 11. 12. 1900.
54. *ibid.*, 16. 12. 1902.
55. Y Werin, 27. 6. 1901.
56. Lloyd George, Better Times (Hodder & Stoughton, 1910) " Trusts and Monopolies" Newcastle 4. 4. 1903, p.11.
57. D.R.Daniel, Dinorwic Lodge Minute Book, 14. 2. 1902.
58. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book, 31. 1. 1903.
59. *see* pp. 446-447.
60. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 7. 5. 1901.
61. *ibid.*, 2. 7. 1901.
62. *ibid.*, 18. 10. 1902.
63. *ibid.*, 2. 7. 1901.
64. Y Werin, 6. 6. 1901.
65. e.g. H.Cunnington from Ffestiniog,
Yr Herald Cymraeg, 19.5.1903. also prominent was D.Owen from Llanberis.

66. Yr Herald Cymraeg. 18. 6. 1901.
67. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book, 30. 11. 1901.
68. ibid., 25. 1. 1902.
69. ibid., 31. 5. 1902.
70. ibid., 2. 9. 1902.
71. ibid., 25. 10. 1902.
72. ibid., 25. 7. 1903.
73. ibid., 15. 9. 1903.
74. ibid.
75. Dinorwic Lodge Minute Book, 1. 8. 1902.
76. K.O.Morgan, Wales in British Politics,
(U.W.P. 1963) p. 212.
77. e.g. the Newcastle speech April 4th 1903;
he did also go on delegations to the T.U.C.
on behalf of the quarrymen.
78. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 14. 4. 1903.
79. Daily News, 24. 11. 1902.
80. Cyril Parry, op. cit., p. 51.
81. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 7. 1. 1902.
82. ibid., 13. 8. 1901.
83. ibid., 27. 8. 1901.
84. Cyril Parry. op. cit., p. 46.
85. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 22. 10. 1901.
86. ibid., 15. 4. 1902.
87. ibid., 10. 9. 1901.
88. ibid., 12. 5. 1903.
89. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book, 4. 5. 1903.
90. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 6. 10. 1903; 1. 12. 1903.
91. ibid., 25. 2. 1902.
92. ibid., 21. 10. 1902.
93. ibid., 18. 2. 1902; Owen Griffith made
substantially the same point in May 1903,
Yr Herald Cymraeg, 12. 5. 1903.

94. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book, 2. 10. 1901.
95. Rev. J. Clifford, Sosialaeth a Dysgeidiaeth Crist
Tract no. 87 (Fabian Society 1899, 1908.)
96. See Emyr Hywel Owen, " Cyn y Chwalfa ac wedyn",
Lleufer, Summer 1963. pp 55 - 60.
97. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 20. 1. 1903.
98. N.W.Q.U. Minute Book. 4. 5. 1903.
99. *ibid.*, 28. 11. 1903.
100. *ibid.*, 19. 12. 1903.
101. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 18. 2. 1902.
102. *ibid.*
103. *ibid.*, 20. 5. 1902.
104. *ibid.*, 31. 3. 1903.
105. *ibid.*, 21. 4. 1903, see editorial.
106. G.Ellis *op. cit.*, p. 109.
107. *ibid.*, p. 108.
108. *ibid.*
109. Daily News, 1. 6. 1903.
110. Roose Williams *op. cit.*, p. 276.

3. "A POOL WHICH IS CALLED IN HEBREW, BETHESDA.."

111. John 5, viii; " there is in Jerusalem by the
sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew
Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a
multitude of them that were sick, blind,
withered " .

112. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 9. 4. 1901.

113. The second verse was particularly apt, roughly
translated it reads,

The beautiful light of the dawn,

From land to land now proclaims,

That daybreak is at hand;
The tops of the hills rejoice,
As they see the sun draw nearer,
And the night retreat away.

114. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 7. 1. 1902.
115. ibid., 16. 12. 1902.
116. There might have been others but in dealing with Welsh names without their addresses it is dangerous to assume that the same name appearing several times in different contexts is the same person; the chances are that they are several people with the same name.
117. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 25. 6. 1901.
118. ibid., 18. 11. 1902.
119. W.W.Jones in ibid., 28. 1. 1902.
120. ibid., 13. 8. 1901.
121. W.J.Parry, Cyfrol y Jiwibili, Eglwys Bethania Arfon, (Dolgellau, 1900) p.5.
122. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 13. 11. 1900.
123. ibid., 12. 11. 1901.
124. Penrhyn Dispute (reprint of " London Daily Chronicle Articles 9. 1. 1903.) p.4.
125. ibid.
126. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 26 . 10. 1902.
127. ibid., 27. 1. 1903.
128. ibid.
129. Amroddiad Eglwys a Chynulleidfa Bethania (1902).
130. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 25. 7. 1901.
131. ibid., 3. 3. 1903.
132. ibid., 14. 4. 1903.
133. ibid., 2. 6. 1903.
134. ibid., 27. 9. 1903.

135. ibid., 7. 7. 1903.
136. ibid., 22. 9. 1903.
137. ibid., 5. 9. 1903.
138. ibid., 6. 10. 1903.
139. ibid., 13. 10. 1903.
140. ibid., 29. 9. 1903.
141. ibid., 17. 11. 1903.
142. I have consulted the reports of four chapels
Bethania and Bethesda (Congregat ionalist),
Gerlan and Jerusalem (Methodist) at the N.L.W.
143. Adroddiad Eglwys a Chynulleidfa Jerusalem M.C.
Bethesda 1900, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
144. Adroddiad o Sefyllfa a thanysgrifiadau
Eglwys a Chynulleidfa, Gerlan Bethesda,
1900, 01, 02, 03.
145. see J. Owen. " Sylwadau y Sylwedydd",
Y Goleuad, 29. 1. 1947. Writing a review
of T. Rowland Hughes! Chwalfa, he recalled the
days of the lock-out when he was a minister
in Bethesda and when " Angry emotion clawed
its way over the handrail of an occassional
Set Faw r ". (deacon's pew)
146. Adroddiad Eglwys Gynulleidfaol Bethesda Arfon,
1900 - 04.
147. Adroddiad.... Gerlan op. cit.
148. Adroddiad... Bethania.
149. ibid.
150. One of the more interesting discussions of the
1904-5 Revival is C.R.Williams, " The Welsh
Religious Revival, 1904-5 ",
British Journal of Sociology. vol iii, (1952)
pp. 242 - 259.

151. Yr Herald Cymraeg, 25. 4. 1905.
152. J. V. Morgan, The Welsh Religious Revival.
1904 - 5. (1909) p. 248.
153. *ibid.*, p. 247.
154. Y Genedl Gymreig. 29. 11. 1904.
155. *ibid.*
156. *ibid.* 6. 12. 1904.
157. *ibid.* 3. 1. 1905.
158. *ibid.*
159. *ibid.* 27. 12. 1904.
160. *ibid.*, 14. 2. 1905.
161. *ibid.*, 29. 11. 1904; 6. 12. 1904; 13. 12. 1904;
14. 2. 1905 etc.
162. *ibid.*, 24. 1. 1905.
163. *ibid.*, 29. 11. 1904.
164. *ibid.*, 14. 2. 1905.
165. *ibid.* 3. 1. 1905.
166. *ibid.* 17. 1. 1905.
167. *ibid.*, 7. 2. 1905.
168. *ibid.*, 14. 2. 1905.
169. J.V.Morgan, *op. cit.* p. 37.
170. Adroddiad..... Jerusalem.

The Pennant Lloyd Agreement.

1. Prices for working slates increased.
2. Fixed maximum scale of wages of quarrymen abolished.
3. Wages of masons fixed at from 3/6d to 4/- a day, according to merit; and up to 4/6d if those wages were granted at Dinorwic Quarries.
4. Platelayers' wages to be from 15s to 18s per week, according to merit; and up to 21/- if those wages were granted at Dinorwic Quarries.
5. Wages to be paid every 4 weeks.
6. A supreme manager and umpire be appointed with powers to decide all disputes.
7. That a Committee be appointed to manage the Penrhyn Quarries Sick Benefit Club, to consist of Lord Penrhyn as President; the supreme manager as vice president; a treasurer, a secretary and one workman from each district in the quarry.
8. Power to turn men out of the works be in the hands of the supreme manager.
9. The power to take men into the works be in the hands of the supreme manager.
10. The right to stop men until their case is inquired into by the supreme manager be in the hands of the chief working manager.
11. The workmen who are working on rocks at 10/- in the £ are to be taken into bargains as circumstances will permit; and that the places

- that are now being worked by them, that can be so let, be let as regular bargains.
12. That the same terms be allowed rubble men as are allowed at the Dinorwic Quarries.
13. That one month be allowed all workmen to return to their places in the quarry.
14. When necessary that partners be allowed to name their new partner to be placed before the chief working manager and if refused by him that the name be placed before the supreme manager, whose decision will be final.
15. That if a quarryman by extra work makes 35/- a week that the agent is not to reduce his price if the rock is of the same quality next month.
16. That the bad rockmen be similarly placed at 24s 6d a week.
17. That all complaints about letting be first referred to a committee appointed by the workmen; and if considered by them to be a proper case that it be placed before the supreme manager for his decision.
18. That in the event of a quarryman failing to earn 27/6d a week for two consecutive months, he is entitled to lay his case before the committee and through them before the supreme manager for his decision.

APPENDIX 2.

Some contributions to the N.W.Q.U. Fund, May, 1901.
showing the extent of support for the Penrhyn struggle.

{ Cigar Sorters & Bundlers Mutual Assoc., { London.	1.	0.	0.
{ Great Mountain Colliery, Tumble, { Llanelli (collection)	6.	7.	0.
Manchester Portmanteau Makers Society.		10.	0.
{ Amalgamated Society of Tailors West End { Branch, London.	5.	0.	0.
{ National Amalgamated Labourer's Union of { G.B. and Ireland, Swansea Branch.	5.	0.	0.
Onllwyn Colliery (workmen's collection)	6.	3.	6.
I.L.P. West Birmingham Branch.	1.	0.	0.
{ Northumberland Miners Mutual Confident { Association.	20.	0.	0.
Compositors "Daily Chronicle", London.		15.	0.
Bolton & District Hairdressers Assoc.		10.	0.
Derby Co-op Provident Society.	100.	0.	0.
Burnley Weavers' Association.	10.	0.	0.
{ Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, { Leeds City Branch.		10.	0.
West Ham & District Trades & Labour Council.	1.	0.	0.
Chatham Dockyard (collection)	2.	0.	0.
{ Birmingham Operative Tin Plate { Workers Society.	10.	0.	0.
{ Amalgamated Society of Engineers, { Barnes Branch.	20.	0.	0.
British Steel Smelters Assoc., Manchester.	5.	0.	0.
{ London Saddle & Harness Makers Trade { Protection Society.	5.	0.	0.
Rhos Ruabon Miners.	20.	0.	0.

Seven Sisters Calvinistic Methodist Church.	10.	0.	
Durham Miners' Association.	50.	0.	0.
General Slaters Union, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.	17.	0.	0.
Operative Bricklayers Society, London.	500.	0.	0.
Dock Wharf & General Workers' Union.	10.	0.	0.
{ Cigar Box Makers & Paperers Trade			
{ Union, London.	10.	0.	0.
{ Leeds National Union of Life			
{ Assurance Agents.	1.	0.	0.

Information about the following people, involved in the Penrhyn struggle, comes partly from their own correspondence with the Penrhyn management but largely from the reports on them prepared, with the help of many informers, by D.D.Davies, 'Local Manager' of the Penrhyn Quarries from March 1902. (GAS PQ 100/41, 42, 43, Correspondence Files of the Penrhyn Quarry.)

Hugh Hughes of 99, Carneddi Road, Bethesda applied in October 1902 for " the small pension given to old and incapacitated workmen " as he had worked in the quarry for 55 years with never a complaint as to his behaviour. A quiet man, he was, according to Davies, " rather indifferent as to religion, politics etc" though he would probably call himself a Methodist Liberal and a member of the Quarrymen's Union ". He was not disloyal to Lord Penrhyn but his daughter was married to John Griffiths, the organizing secretary of the strikers' choir in North Wales.

Robert Pritchard, aged 82 applied for a quarry pension in July 1902. He had worked for the first 8 months of the strike but Davies reported that he was " known as being a passively disloyal old man. His sympathies entirely with the strikers." He lived with his daughter Mrs.Elizabeth Williams who was convicted of intimidating Messrs. John Evans and R.R. Davies on May 30th, 1901.

Richard Pritchard Jones applied for work in the quarry on April 19th, 1902, his two sons being already at

work. He had been on the Executive Committee of the ill-fated strike in the quarry in 1865 and had soon afterwards left for America; he returned in 1875 and in 1879 he and his sons were transferred into the Badrockmen class, " like most of those who had been admitted as quarrymen after the strike of 1874 ". This may have been the experience that soured his feelings toward the union for he refused to accept the demotion and left the quarry to work on the Llandegai Parish roads,. He became " very loyal to Lord Penrhyn " but his application for work was refused on the grounds of his " age and infirmity ".

R.O.Jones, a young quarryman of 25 years of age had, according to Davies, " been taking very active part in disturbances in the neighbourhood " since the quarry had re-opened, " I have his name on the list of those to be excluded ". He applied for work on the Great Western Railway in Newport Monmouthshire, in October 1902.

Owen Jones of 49, Penybryn, Bethesda had spent 50 of his 75 years in the employ of Lord Penrhyn when he applied for his relief not to be discontinued in August 1902. Davies reported that " during the strike of 1896 - 7 this old man was most disloyal to the management. Although a member of the same chapel as Mr.Pritchard (an under-manager) there was nothing that he would not have done against Mr.Pritchard. I have no doubt that he is even more disloyal at present though he has not been able to show it ". One of the points against his application was that his son J.O.Jones, who had once worked in the quarry and who had since moved on to become a Methodist Minister and a teacher in the Bala Theological College, had also given

" all his influence against the management during the 1896 - 7 strike ". Jones' application for relief was refused.

Richard Humphreys, 10, Penybryn, Bethesda, was to work in slate quarries in the Nantlle Valley in October 1902 when his wife, Mrs.H.Humphreys, wrote to the Penrhyn Quarries asking that he be employed there as this would encourage her son, who was already at work in the quarry to return home. He was at the time " compelled to lodge in the Parish of Llandegai... on account of the strikers' threatening aspect ", the whole family being hooted and booed when he was at home. Davies however, thought that the longer Richard Humphreys stayed in Nantlle the better and that his son was better-off away from home; for Richard Humphreys had had an eventful life for a quarryman, having been jailed for nine months for attempting to defraud his employers while working at Fodlas Quarry, Bettws-y-Coed, during the 1896-7 stoppage; he had, moreover, been " all through his life a great poacher " who had been heavily fined for assaulting a Police sergeant in a poaching affray.

Jollie Thomas was an Englishwoman who had married a Penrhyn quarryman and, as a result of the strike, found herself in New Tredegar, Monmouthshire. She wrote to Young in May 1902 protesting her own loyalty to Lord Penrhyn and explaining that her husband would have been the first to recommence work " but his family relations are to him stronger than his own strength to stand... and myself, his wife, have fought the fight alone here in the South till I am quite boycotted by those of the North who are

Working here with their hearts at home". If the management were to concede a little, she thought, then at least five men, whose names she enclosed and " who were born on the grand hills around and consider that they want a little freedom ", would return willingly to work. Of the five she mentioned Davies could discover little that was objectionable in three of them; Robert Griffiths, originally of Braich, Tregarth, however, was a quarryman " on excluded list " having been on the committee in 1896 - 7 and he was still speaking at meetings; he was, moreover, suspected of having taken part in the New Years' Eve 1901 riot; Thomas Jones, Rhiwlas, was also on the excluded list for taking part in disturbances at Rhiwlas and molesting Robert Daniel Jones, a quarryman.

Robert Moses Roberts of Hermon Road, Llandegai was not considered to be a good workman and he took an active part in some of the disturbances arising out of the dispute. He had been one of a crowd that had roughed up Mr. Thomas Price in 1900 and though he had applied for work in the spring of 1901 he had then withdrawn his name; on July 31st 1901 he and three other young men were convicted at Bangor Police Court and fined 20/- with costs for obstructing the street opposite the Victoria Hotel, Bethesda on July 20th when a crowd of three to four hundred had gathered there. Since then he had been charged for being drunk and disorderly though the case against him was dismissed, partly because P.C.66 had already given him a " very severe thrashing ". For all of those reasons his name had been put ^{on} down the list of those to be excluded ". Under 30 years old and married he applied for work again in May 1902 explaining his earlier behaviour in terms of

his having " been very foolish to be persuaded so much by other people ". His father and brother had been at work since the quarry had re-opened on June 11th, 1901, and Davies considered that his main fault was that " when he gets druhk he is an excitable little chap". E.A.Young gave him the benefit of the doubt " for his wife's sake " and he was re-admitted to the quarry.

Edward Davies of Penygroes applied for work in June 1902 while working in South Wales. D.R.Davies gave him the following report: " I have his name on the Black List... one of the wildest before the strike. He was every day taking active part in the disturbances in the quarry. Also one of the defendants in the Richard Hughes & Sons case. Not convicted but R.Hughes still declares that this young man was one of the most cruel of those who attacked him and that he kicked him most unmercifully. Apart from his connection with the disturbances he is quite undesirable, he was always discontented and unsettled while in the quarry".

Rees J. Tyrner of Bethesda re-started work at the quarry when it re-opened in June 1901 but left on January 21st, 1902 to work on the London & North Western Railway because " he said his neighbours molested him because he was at work here while most of the late employees were on strike ".

When he applied for work in May 1902 Lewis Lewis Owen of Caergors, Llanllechid claimed that he had been too ill to start work earlier. Davies confirmed that he suffered from asthma and some affection of the lungs but added that he had " been very disloyal, his wife extremely

so... They have a boy also who has been continually annoying the Caellwngrydd men ".

Owen Lewis was anxious that his mother should become the tenant of the family home when his father died in 1902. Davies reported that he was " a sullen man " who " is on the bad list " though there was nothing definite against him other than that he was apparently " under the influence of Robert Roberts, Tynlan... one of the strikers' leaders in that neighbourhood".

Catherine Davies wrote in April 1902 pleading that her son be appointed a machiner in the quarry. Davies reported that she had had 3 sons in the quarry before the strike, none had applied for work, two were on the excluded list one " a wild young man " the other " stupid and obstinate ", both having been involved in disturbances.

James Jones of 19, Mill Street, Bethesda defied his father in February 1902 when he applied to re-start work. His grandfather and two uncles were working but not his father - " I can't help my father ", he wrote. His father, according to Davies, was " a great striker... taking active part in molesting our men " and with his " name on Excluded list ". James Jones himself was refused employment after a medical examination showed that he had a tubercular knee and was unfit for work.

When William Hugh Roberts' brother left the quarry in June 1903 William Roberts was suspected of having persuaded him to leave despite the fact that he himself also worked at the quarry. It was later reported, however,

that Richard Wynne Pritchard may have been the man responsible for persuading Roberts' brother to leave. Living in Glasinfryn Pritchard was described by Davies as " all through this trouble..... one of the wildest and most bitter among the strikers in that locality. He has been speaking in the mass meetings on several occasions and he has been one of the most spiteful in his language. I have no doubt that he has done all in his power to prolong the dispute and I think he thoroughly deserves to be left out - the name was one of the first we put on the Excluded List " .

Toward the end of 1902 the quarry management wrote to women in the district asking them to put up men working in the quarry; two replied, both refusing. Mary Hughes of Slate Mill Cottages, Coed Park quite agreed that the cottage in which she lived was a workman's house, but, she added, " it has been a home to me too, Mr. Davies, for over twenty-two years and many things have happened here " . Miss Ellen Thomas also of Slate Mill Cottages replied to the quarry's letter and though Davies " could not make much of her story " he was in " no doubt but that she is in sympathy with the strikers and does not like to take men who are at work in the quarry and therefore is ready to make any excuse for refusing " .

In July 1903 Thomas Evans, aged 70, wrote to the Rt. Hon. Lady Penrhyn asking her ladyship to allow him a free ticket to a rest home in Rhyl, a gift normally granted to unwell quarrymen. In this case the quarry surgeon, Dr. Mills Roberts, had informed the applicant that a change of air would do him a great deal of good. Davies

reported that Evans had been employed most of his life in the quarry and later as a labourer in the quarry workshops but that he had been pensioned off 18 months earlier " when the staff at the workshops was reduced... because he was a lazy workman continually sitting down to talk and gossip. He was beside a disloyal man with all his sympathies with the strikers ". He was not given a ticket to go to Rhyl.

Richard P. Pritchard, a rybelwr in the quarry, aged over 60, applied for a Rhyl ticket a few weeks later and was granted one; he was, according to Davies, " steady and loyal and resumed work, June 11th 1901 together with three of his wife's sons ".

William R. Williams of Yr Afr Aur, High Street, Bethesda had left the Penrhyn Quarries in 1891 as a result of total deafness which made it dangerous for him to continue in employment; he started a coal business which later collapsed. In August 1903 he applied for work at the quarry though it is not clear with what result. Davies reported that he was " an efficient workman in the sheds but owing to his deafness he had become very distrustful and subject to fits of bad-temper and stubbornness that made him quite unmanageable at times even his brother could not control him... he was a man of socialistic ideas and would devour any literature of that kind that would come to his hands. Nothing is known of him in connection with the present trouble ".

In January 1903 three men applied for the tenancy of a house in Braichmelyn; Davies reported: the first had been in the quarry since 1901 as a jobbing mason and

lived in an old classroom in Tyntwr school, he was a member of St. Ann's Church; William Parry of Braichmelyn, a young married man, was considered " a very disloyal man. His name in on the Excluded List for having taken part in the disturbances which brought on the strike in the quarry ", he had been found guilty of intimidating Mr. Thomas Price on November 1st 1900 and had been fined 40/- with costs by the Bangor bench; John Owen Williams of Penybryn, Bethesda, a fitter aged about 30 needed a house nearer the quarry as he had to work nights, he had worked in the Pandreiniog Quarry during the 1896 - 7 stoppage but had " been undoubtedly loyal all through the present trouble " and was an "obedient man and a very good worker ", a " Methodist before the present trouble" his one fault would appear to have been that he was " rather too fond of drink".

In 1903 several men applied for the tenancy of a house in Caerberllan. D.R. Davies reported on the applicants: 1. David Davies, aged 35, of Cilgeraint had been apprenticed as a fitter in the Quarry and worked there until August 1900 he left to seek his fortune in England, he soon returned disillusioned, however, and re-started work on November 1st 1900, " a good, steady and obedient workman " he was injured in an accident and one of his feet had to be amputated. He was out of step with his family since his father, brother and all his near relatives, except for David Davies, Penrhiw, were " among the irreconcilable strikers "; his family were also Methodists and members of Jerusalem Chapel but David Davies himself, along with his wife and children,

attended St. Ann's Church where he was a member of the choir.

2. O. Thomas Morgan of Glanrafon Tregarth had both his father and brother at work in the quarry with him, he himself having started back in September 1901. A quarryman, aged 25, married with one child, he was, however, " a very poor workman " and, moreover, " after he resumed work he was recognised by some of our men as one who had been very active during the disturbances in the quarry. He had been under the influence of men who are.... amongst the most irreconcilable of the strikers at Tregarth ".

3. Griffith Williams came originally from Bethesda but lived then in Upper Bangor; he had worked as a rybelwr in the quarry until 1877 when he had gone to America, on returning he wandered from one place to another in North Wales and came back to the Penrhyn Quarry from Cricieth in February 1902. He had a wife and one son, considered " a worthless young man ", and he himself was a " very inferior workman " though " quiet and loyal " as far as Davies could tell.

4. Elias Parry, contractor No. 547 in the quarry was 34 and married with one child. He was considered excellent in every way and he regularly attended Glanogwen Church.

5. Owen Parry, 14 Goronwy Street, Gerlan was 38 and worked in the quarry with the eldest of his four children; an average worker he was steady, respectable and quite loyal though he had not started work until February 1903. This was put down to the fact that he owned a house and lived next door but one to Henry Jones, the committee chairman. Since re-starting work he had,

" suffered much molestation " and he had sued a neighbour before the local magistrates, the case being dismissed. He was a member of Siloam Wesleyan Chapel, Bethesda.

6. Hugh Roberts of 9 Ogwen Street, Bethesda was a " very quiet and loyal " Engine Driver in the quarry, both he and his wife were members of the same Independent Chapel as W.J.Parry..

7. Thomas Williams, a " strong and very active " badrockman of 23 had started work on March 3rd 1903 and, a quiet and obedient workman, he was anxious to bring his wife and children over from Bodorgan, Anglesey.

In March 1903 John R.Jones of 42 Callepa, Bangor applied for a house in Bethesda, he was originally from Rhiwlas but after starting work in August 1902 he had been forced to " shatter a comfortable home and many other comforts ". He, his son and his son-in-law had originally applied for, and received, work in the spring of 1901 but they had then written to the men's committee saying that they had allowed themselves to be persuaded to apply for work but that they would not go in, and they did not for another year..

In April 1902 D.D.Davies wrote the following report to E.A.Young concerning Edward Parry, Gwernydd: " He is a young married man about 25 years of age and worked before the strike as a quarryman in No. 310 Twllwndwr Right. He was a fairly good workman, but a wild ignorant and socialistic person.

I am told he was among the foremost in instigating

the disturbance which led to the present strike; and overlookers 1, 2, 4, inform me that he was among the wildest at the time of the 1896 - 7 strike.

Edwin Davies his partner in the quarry reports about his conduct just before the beginning of the strike. When Mr. H.P. Roberts had stopped setting on the Right Side, Edwin Davies and another man were sent to ask when would the setting be resumed. On their return to tell the men that setting would be resumed as soon as the men who had already taken their bargains would settle down to work, this young man tried to instigate the men to go down to the lower galleries to prevent the men who had taken their bargains working; and he said that he wished he had a gun and dum-dum bullets to shoot Lord Penrhyn. He would have then pulled the bullets out of his body and shoot them into Mr. Young's. He was certain, he added, he should go to heaven for doing it.

Another workman, Hugh H. Edwards, Treflys has told me that he noticed Ed. Parry among the most threatening and turbulent on the Right Side before the strike and at the time they left the quarry.

Ed Parry has been away working during part of the strike but he has been seen occasionally in the crowds in the village and associating with the wildest and most turbulent young men in the neighbourhood but not doing anything.

His wife is an adopted daughter of John Lewis (Gwernnydd his wife's niece) who recently obtained the tenancy of the Taincoed Farm, Llanllechid, he being at the time a striker, member of the Relief Committee and having a son also among the strikers.

Morris Davies came to the Penrhyn Quarry from Pantdreiniog Quarry where he had, for several months previously, acted as Slate Examiner and kept the slates account of the quarrymen. He left Pantdreiniog when Richard Griffith Pritchard, " one of the strike leaders ", took his place as slate examiner.

Griffith Daniel Jones aged 50 was refused re-admission to the Penrhyn Quarries in July 1901 as he was considered " passively disloyal " and had also been seen in various crowds; he had, at one time, been overheard by Griffith Williams, then working, saying that he would " kill one of the traitors if he had the chance" .

David Owens of Tanyrhiw, Tregarth, applied for work in September 1901 on writing paper embellished with a suitably "loyal" picture of Bangor cathedral. He was " on the Excluded List ".

David Morris, 64 Hill Street, Upper Bangor, was a quarryman aged 45 who resumed work on April 1st 1902. Considered a " very quiet and loyal man and a very good workman " he would have applied for work earlier only " he was afraid ". Before the strike he lived at Bryntirion, Bethesda, and had been a member of Jerusalem Methodist Chapel.

Richard Thomas, a contractor of 30 years of age, considered generally steady, hardworking and very loyal " suffered a great deal of intimidation and persecution " which forced him to move to Bangor. He had resumed work on June 11th and was an Anglican.

John Williams, 14 Gordon Terrace, Bethesda aged 35, had resumed work on January 10th 1902. An average worker he was always "fairly loyal", he and his family were Church people.

Hugh Parry aged 34 was a "steady man" and an average badrockman who before the strike had lived at Lldiart Gwenyn, Carneddi Road. He was "not a very pleasant man to deal with in the quarry rather inclined to grumble and nurse a grievance" but he was a nephew of Percival Jones and considered loyal. He and his wife and ~~three~~ children had "suffered as much annoyance and molestation from the strikers as any... until they were compelled to remove to Bangor". He and his family adhered to the Independent denomination.

Henry Parry of 5 Douglas Terrace, Bethesda was a 58 year old quarryman who had resumed work on June 11th 1901. He was a good workman, despite being deaf.. He had ten children, three of whom also worked in the quarry; born and brought up in and around Tregarth they were Church people and considered loyal. Not all the children appear to have been "well behaved", however, and Edward, in particular, was very fond of drink having been fined at Bangor Magistrates for drunkenness in 1903.

Robert Roberts of Cefn Royal Oak, Rachub, was a quarryman with four or five children who resumed work in April 1902. "A sober and very hard worker" his loyalty however was considered to be a "matter of expediency". He was a member of the Carmel Independent Chapel.

David Morris, a 42 year old quarryman, resumed work in April 1902. Considered a " very good workman, very steady and loyal " he had lived at Bryntirion, Bethesda after he had got married (he, himself being a native of Gelli, Tregarth) but had moved to 64 Hill, Street., Bangor since re-starting work. A Churchman before his marriage he had then attended Jerusalem M.C.

John Morris Jones of Vron Rhiw, Tregarth, was a 35 year old quarryman who had gone back to the quarry in April 1902. Considered a good, steady, and loyal worker: he was married to the daughter of John Griffith, Pandy Farm who was also the niece of Richard Griffith, Talgae and of the late William Williams " Counter ", Port Penrhyn. A Wesleyan with no children he worked in the quarry with Melancthon Williams, one of the leading spokesmen of those who went back to work.

Owen E. Jones of Tanrhiw, Tregarth was a 32 year old badrockman, good, steady and very loyal, who had resumed work on June 11th. The son of David Jones, Butcher, Tregarth he was a Wesleyan though his wife was a Churchwoman.

Richard Thomas, aged 30, was a very hard working " very quiet and very loyal " badrockman contractor who used to live at Coetmor Mount, Bethesda but he and his family were " frightened out of the place by the strikers ", their house being one of those attacked on the "memorable" New Year's Eve of 1901, and he had since moved to 18 Friars Road, Bangor. He was a Churchman.

Henry Pritchard, a quarryman aged 30, of Hafodty, Tregarth, was one of a family of father and four sons who were at work. Considered very good, steady and loyal he had gone back on June 11th, 1901, and his father, William Pritchard had been one of the six men who had met E.A.Young at the Pay Office before the Quarry had re-opened.

Thomas Williams a badrockman from Penygroes, aged 30, had resumed work on June 11th and, though considered to be only a " fair workman ", he was " quiet and very loyal".

The following short reports on men from Glasinfryn were prepared by one of D.D.Davies' informants known only as " T " in 1903.

1. Samuel Griffiths (first house from the school) has been away all the time not interfered with any one.
2. J-no. Jones - son or adopted son of David Williams who is working in the Quarry as a dayman and is home ill.
3. Richard Wynne Pritchard, labourer, has addressed meeting at Market Hall, Bethesda.
4. Richard Hughes, Tai House, nothing against him.(Accepted)
5. William Hughes, labourer, quiet but wife has been very bad.
6. William Pritchard, Quarryman (129), fairly quiet but very sneaky, actively hostile. (Refused)
7. O.J.Davies, W.B.Davies: Brothers, latter a boy. mother receiving £5 a year as husband was killed in the Quarry. She is bad. OJD is in South Wales. Have lost sight of the boy for a month or two.
8. R. Roberts, W. Roberts: Both quiet but former is lazy.

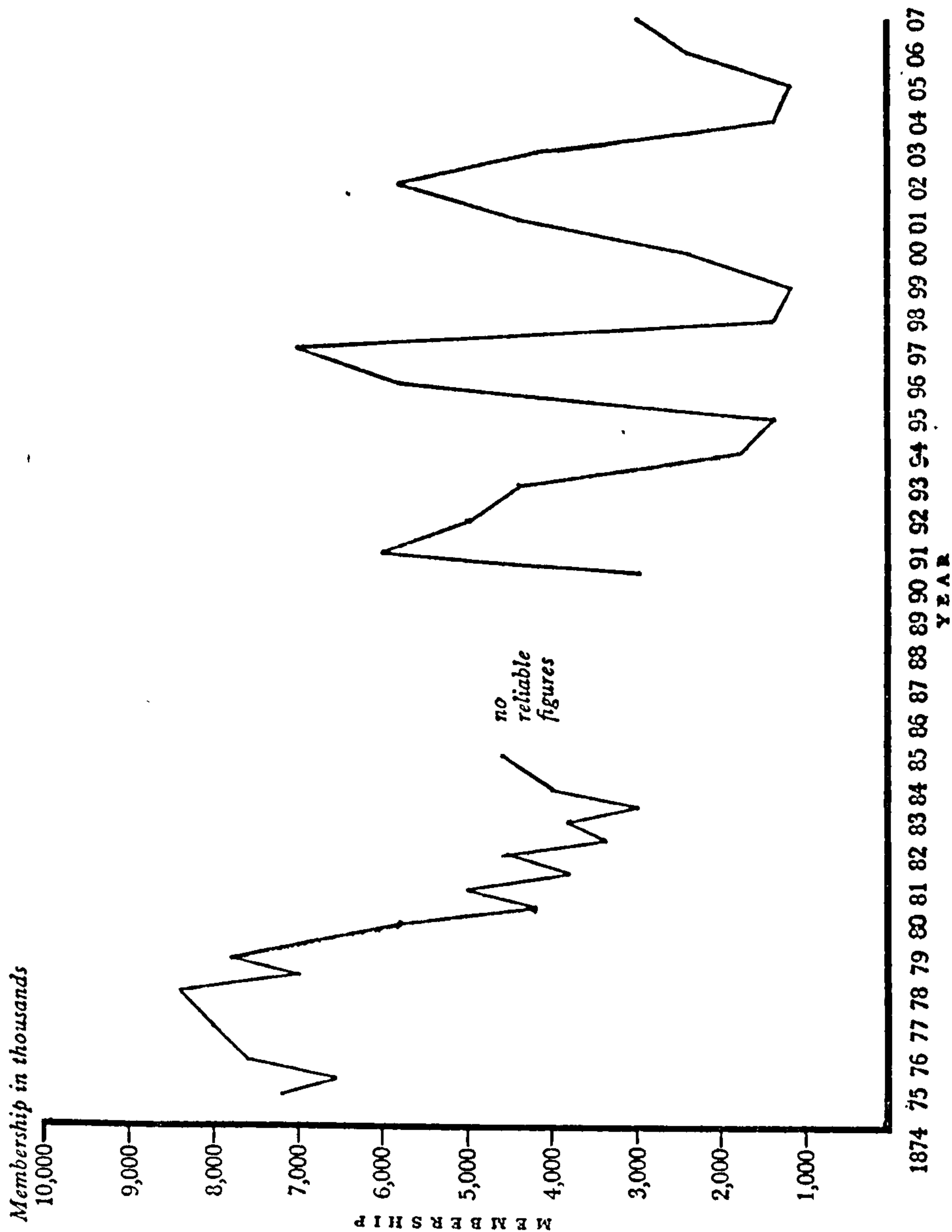
9. R.O. Hughes (Dick Blue) has been away in South Wales all the time.
10. Buckley - very bitter to those he knows.
11. H.M.Roberts, quarryman (129), now living in Bangor, but he has left a little furniture and keeps both houses going; a mouthpiece - bad. (Refused)
12. T. Hughes & son; gone out relief during last strike but not this time - has been away, son was in a weighing machine. (Accepted)
13. Beny Williams (21 years of age) spat in the face of I. Lewis who has been working in Quarry since June 11th.
14. W.J.Hughes (207), large family, regretted the strike, has been quiet all the time.

Jno. Williams (son of Eos Infryh) has been away all the time.

W. Roberts (Tenorydd Infryn) has worked on the line has not interfered with any one.

APPENDIX 4.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE NORTH WALES QUARRYMEN'S UNION 1874 - 1907



A note on sources.

The historian of the slate quarrymen of North Wales is fortunate: there is a considerable quantity of material relating to the industry and to the North Wales Quarrymen's Union in safe keeping, mostly with the Gwynedd Archive Service.

He is fortunate also to be able to consult the work of other historians, particularly of the late D. Dylan Pritchard, the late J. Rhose Williams, and Dr. Cyril Parry.

I have been particularly fortunate in being granted permission by Lady Janet Douglas Pennant to consult the hitherto closed boxes in the Penrhyn Quarry Mss.

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Oakeley.

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Blaenyddol.

Ioan Brothen.

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